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Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology


Righteousness [N] [T] [E]

God the Father is righteous (just); Jesus Christ his Son is the Righteous (Just) One; the Father through the Son and in the Spirit gives the gift of righteousness (justice) to repentant sinners for salvation; such believing sinners are declared righteous (just) by the Father through the Son, are made righteous (just) by the Holy Spirit working in them, and will be righteous (just) in the age to come. They are and will be righteous because they are in a covenant relation with the living God, who is the God of all grace and mercy and who will bring to completion what he has begun in them by declaring them righteous for Christ's sake.

The noun righteousness/justice (Gk. *dikaioσune* [dikaioσuvnh]) bears meanings in the New Testament related to two sources. The major one is the Hebrew thought-world of the Old Testament and particularly the *sdq* [q;d'x] word group, which locates the meaning in the sphere of God's gracious, covenantal relation to his people and the appropriate behavior the covenant partners (Yahweh and Israel) toward each other. The other is the regular use of the words in everyday Greek as spoken in New Testament times, which fixes the meaning in the sphere of a life in conformity to a known standard or law—thus honesty, legality, and so on. This latter meaning in terms of doing God's will is of course also found in the Old Testament.

When we translate the Greek words based on the stem *dikai-* into English we make use of two sets of words based on the stems, just and right. So we have just, justice, justify and right, righteous, righteousness, rightwise (old English). The use of two sets of English words for the one set of Greek words sometimes causes difficulties for students of the Bible. This is especially so when the verb "to justify," describing God's word and action, is used with the noun "righteousness," pointing to the result of that action.

The Gospels. The appropriate background to bear in mind for understanding the teaching of both John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ on righteousness/justice are two of the dominant ideas of the Old Testament. First, Yahweh-Elohim, the Lord God, is righteous in that he speaks and Acts in accordance with the purity of his own holy nature; further, what he says and does for Israel is in accordance with his establishment of the covenant with this people (see [Psalm 22:31](#); [40:10](#);



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51:14; 71:15-24; Amos 5:21-24). Micah declared the righteousness of God as his faithfulness to keep and act within the covenant and thus to save Israel from her enemies, as well as to vindicate the penitent.

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Second, the covenant people of God are called to live righteously, that is, in conformity to the demands of the covenant and according to God's will (see Psalm 1:4-6; 11:7; 72:1; Isa 1:16-17). Having within the covenantal relation with God the gift of salvation, they are to behave as the people of the holy Lord. Hosea, the prophet of divine love, ties righteousness with mercy, loving kindness, and justice (2:19; 10:12).

John the Baptist called for repentance and righteous behavior such as is pleasing to God (Luke 3:7-9). Further, it was because of the demands of such righteousness—fulfilling the will of God—that he actually was willing to baptize Jesus (Matt 3:15). Likewise Jesus presents righteousness as conformity to the will of God expressed in the Mosaic law (Matt 13:17; 23:29; 27:4, 19, 24) and also conformity to his own teachings concerning the requirements of the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:17-20). However, conformity to his own teachings presupposes that he is the Messiah, that he fulfills the Law and the Prophets, and that what he declares is the morality of the kingdom of God relating to the totality of life, inward and outward, seen by God. Further, Jesus does allow that conformity to the norms of the scribes and Pharisees is a certain kind of (inferior) righteous living, but he contrasts it with the proper righteousness he exhibits, proclaims, and looks for (Luke 5:30-32; 15:7; 18:9) in the disciples of the kingdom. So in a fundamental sense, in the four Gospels righteousness as a quality of living is intimately related to the arrival and membership in the kingdom of God and is only possible because God has come to his people as their Redeemer.

The Gospel of Matthew makes clear that from the beginning Jesus' mission is to fulfill God's righteousness (3:15). This is brought to realization in his words and ministry so that the kingdom and salvation of God are in him and come through him. Alongside this is the righteousness in the new covenant, which is right thinking, feeling, speaking, and behavior on the part of disciples of the kingdom, who do what God approves and commands. This moral substance is very clear from the detailed contents of the Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5-7), where the will of God is set forth by Jesus and is contrasted with a mere legalism. Yet what Jesus proclaims and outlines is certainly not a self-righteousness, it is portrayed as the outflowing of a life that is centered on submitting to, worshiping, and seeking after God and confessing Jesus as the Messiah (see especially 5:17-42).

In the Gospel of Luke, we read of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon and Joseph of Arimathea being called righteous (1:6; 2:25; 23:50) because they embody genuine religion according to the norms of the Old Covenant. They trust in and obey God. Further, Jesus himself as the Servant of Yahweh is the righteous or innocent one (23:47), even as the centurion confessed at the cross. The righteousness of the kingdom of God is practical and reverses the standards of the regular social order (3:11, 14; 6:20-26). At the last day it will be those who have been genuinely righteous in terms of doing the will of God who will be declared just (14:14).

In the Gospel of John, God is righteous (17:25) and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, has a specific role with respect to righteousness (16:8, 10). It is the unique work of the Spirit, who comes into the world in the name of Jesus the Messiah, to convince/convict the world of righteousness. The

Spirit both vindicates Jesus as the Righteous One, whom the Father has raised from the dead and exalted into heaven, and also makes clear what kind of righteous life is required by, and, in grace, provided by God.

The Letters of Paul. The uses the noun *dikaioisune* [dikaiosuvnh] (righteousness), the adjective *dikaios* [divkaio] (righteous), and the verb *dikaio* [dikaiovw] (to justify or to declare and treat as righteous) over one hundred times and his usage reflects a particular development from the use of *sdq* [q;d'x] in the Old Testament. God is righteous when he Acts according to the terms of the covenant he has established. Righteousness is God's faithfulness as the Lord of the covenant. God Acts righteously when he performs saving deeds for his people and thereby in delivering them places them in a right relation to himself (see especially Isa. 51 and 61). The interchangeability of righteousness and salvation is seen in this verse: "I am bringing my righteousness near, it is not far away; and my salvation will not be delayed. I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendor to Israel" (Isa 46:13).

Thus God's people are righteous when they are in a right relation with him, when they enjoy his salvation; they are considered by God as the Judge of the world as righteous when they are being and doing what he requires in his covenant. So it may be said that the concept of righteousness in Paul belongs more to soteriology than to moral theology, even though it has distinct moral implications.

God's righteousness is, for Paul, God's saving activity in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, his Son. It is activity that is directly in line with the saving activity of God in the Old Testament. The acceptance of the unique saving deed of God at Calvary by faith in the person of Jesus Christ is that which God has ordained to be the means sinners (the unrighteous and the disobedient ones) to enter into the right with God, the Father, and receive the forgiveness of sins. God as the Judge justifies believing sinners by declaring them righteous in and through Jesus Christ; then he expects and enables these sinners to become righteous in word and deed. Faith works by love.

The righteousness of which Paul speaks, especially in the letters to Galatia and Rome, stands in contrast to the righteousness that is based on the fulfillment of the law by man as the covenant partner of God. It is "the righteousness of faith" and "the righteousness of God" (Rom 10:6; Php 3:9), and is most certainly the gift of God. From the human standpoint what God looks for in those who receive the gospel is "faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20). God's gift to those who believe is a righteousness that exists and can be given only because of the sacrificial death of Jesus for sinners and his resurrection from the dead as the vindicated Lord of all.

So God as the righteous Judge justifies—places in a right relation with himself within the new covenant of grace—those who believe the gospel of the Father concerning his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And he justifies Jew and Greek alike on precisely the same basis, by faith alone without works, and he makes no distinction whatsoever between the people of the Old Covenant and the Gentiles. Abraham, says Paul, was himself justified by faith alone (Gen 12:3; 15:6; 18:18; Rom 4:3; Gal 3:8). In fact, Paul confessed that the power of the gospel to be the word of salvation to both Jew and Greek was based on the revelation of the righteousness of God therein—of God the Father acting justly for the sake of his Son (Rom 1:16-17).

The gift of a right relation with the Father through the Son in the Spirit, which is justification, creates a relationship for believers both with God and fellow believers that they are to dedicate to righteousness in the sense of obeying Christ (Rom 6:12-14; cf. 2 Cor 6:7, 14; 9:10; Eph 4:24; Php 1:11). Though they could never become righteous before God by their efforts to conform their lives to his will, out of gratitude and love they are to serve him because he has given them the gift of salvation through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has pronounced them righteous, has reconciled them to himself and removed their alienation, and he has transformed their relation to him into that of friendship. Therefore, since God has made them his own and given to them his righteousness, their duty and privilege is to be righteous in conduct. And he promises that on the last day and for the life of the age to come he will actually make them to be truly and effectually righteous in all that they are, become, and do.

The word "eschatological" is often used with reference to this gift of righteousness. The reason is this. It is in anticipation of what God will do for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ at the last day that he pronounces guilty sinners righteous now in this evil age. At the last day, God the Father will be vindicated and all will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Those who believe will become and remain righteous in their resurrection bodies of glory. Now and before the new age arrives, by the proclamation of the gospel and by the presence of the Spirit, that which is not yet (the fullness of righteousness of the age to come) is actually made available by the will and declaration of the Father, through the mediation of Jesus Christ the Lord and by the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit. Already there is the provision of a right relation with God through the preaching of the gospel, but there is not yet the experience of the fullness of righteousness as an imparted gift. Now believers merely have the firstfruits of that which awaits them in the age to come.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that Paul does not use the word "righteousness" in its more familiar meaning as a virtue. In fact he does so particularly in 1 and 2 Timothy. He commends striving for righteousness (1 Tim 6:11) as the right motivation of a person of God; and he sees the use of the inspired Scriptures as being to train Christians in righteousness (2 Tim 3:16). Further, as a reward for his efforts for the kingdom of God looks for "the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim 4:8).

Other New Testament Books. Righteousness in terms of the actual doing and completing the will of God is found outside the Gospels in various places. It is found in Acts 10:35 in terms of fearing God and doing righteousness. In Hebrews 12:11 we read of the peaceful fruit of righteousness. In 1 Peter Christians are to die to sin and live to righteousness (2:24) and be prepared to suffer for righteousness' sake (3:14). In 1 John the doing of righteousness in terms of following Jesus Christ, the righteous One, who came in flesh and will come again in glory, is what vital Christianity is all about. Believers who act righteously in word and deed proclaim their righteous Lord and show the error of the false teachers (2:29; 3:7-10).

The most discussed passage outside the Pauline corpus with respect to righteousness and justification is James 2:14-26. Here, at least on the surface, it appears that James is disagreeing with Paul. In fact the truth is that they have different starting points and are facing different missionary and pastoral situations.

A faith without works is said by James to be a dead faith, and Abraham is presented as being justified by his works because he was prepared to

sacrifice his beloved son. For James, faith comes to completion in practical works and it was this completed faith of Abraham, says James, which was reckoned to him for righteousness ([Gen 15:6](#); [James 2:23](#)). Thus for James a person is placed in a right relation with God by a faith expressed in works. It is possible to reconcile Paul's approach and that of James if it is remembered that Paul himself spoke of "faith expressing itself through love" ([Gal 5:6](#); cf. [James 2:1, 8](#)).

Peter Toon

See also [Ethics](#); [God](#); [Justice](#)

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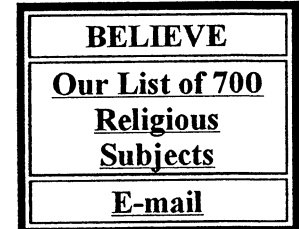
Righteousness, Righteous

General Information

Righteousness is the quality of rightness or justice. It is an attribute of God. As a result of Original Sin and the Fall, man is corrupt and lacking in righteousness (Rom. 3:23) and is also incapable of making himself righteous (Rom. 3:19,20). In **justification**, man is declared righteous through the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, when he has Faith (2Cor. 5:21). In **sanctification**, man is progressively made righteous in character and conduct (1John 1:7-9).

In general, the concept of righteousness is so closely related to justification that the two subjects are generally treated as one. Therefore, please go to our articles on [Justification](#).

Our articles on [Sanctification](#) may also be informative.



Righteousness, Righteous

Advanced Information

The Hebrew word regularly translated "righteous" or "just" is saddiq and originally meant "straight" or "right." The corresponding Greek term is dikaios, and in Greek society referred to that which is in accordance with law or social norm. The noun forms are sedeq (or sedaqa) and dikaiosyne. The verbs sadak and dikaioo mean "to do justice," "to be just," "to vindicate," or "to justify" in the forensic sense of "declare righteous" or "treat as just."

OT Usage

The God of Israel is revealed as a God of righteousness, who acts rightly in all his works and judgments (Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:4; Ps. 11:7; Dan. 9:14). The OT concept of righteousness is closely linked with God's judgeship (Pss. 9:8; 50:6; 143:2). God judges equitably; he does not clear the guilty or forsake the righteous, and the judges of Israel are commanded to act according to his example (Exod. 23:7; Deut. 1:16-17; 10:17-18; Ps. 98:9). Thus, the righteousness of God is revealed in his punishment of the wicked and disobedient (Neh. 9:33; Ps. 7:9-17; Lam. 1:18; Dan. 9:14). But more emphatically God's righteousness is made known in his deliverance of his people from their enemies and oppressors (I Sam. 12:6-11; Pss. 9:7-9; 51:14; Isa. 46:11-13). God as judge comes to the rescue of the poor and the oppressed, delivering them from injustice and restoring their rights (Pss. 34:16-22; 72:1-4; 82; Isa. 11:4). He even treats them as righteous, in the relative sense that they are in the right as over against their wicked oppressors (Pss. 7:6-11; 143: 1-3, 11-12). Consequently God's righteous judgment is often expressed in terms of his saving acts. Righteousness many times is closely related to God's salvation, mercy, and lovingkindness, especially in the Psalms and Isaiah (Pss. 40:10; 85:9-10; 98:2-3; Isa. 45:8; 46:13; 51:5; Jer. 9:24).

This emphasis on the righteousness of God in the form of salvation should be understood within the context of God's covenant relationship with Israel. God by his grace made a covenant with Abraham and his descendants, and his righteousness is seen in his faithfulness in keeping that covenant (I Chr. 16:16-

17, 35; Isa. 46:9-13; Jer. 33:25-26). The covenant does not make sinful Israel immune from divine judgment, but after chastisement God delivers his people and thus reveals his righteousness (the lesson of the Exile). God justifies his covenant people, declaring them righteous, not because they have perfectly kept the law, but because (or on the condition that) their repentant hearts trust in him and seek to keep his covenant (Gen. 15:6; Pss. 32:10-11; 103: 17-18; Isa. 50:8; 53:11). This judgment or forensic act of God is therefore both an act of righteousness and a gift of divine mercy.

Modern Bible scholars often overemphasize the benevolent aspect of God's righteousness in the OT and lose sight of the legal and punitive aspects. But God's righteous judgship is seen in the punishment of the lawbreaker as well as in the deliverance of the justified. It is noteworthy, however, that the positive aspect of God's righteousness is more common in the OT, while the punitive aspect is more closely associated with God's wrath.

The climax of this positive aspect is found in the theme of Messiah, the one who will be a truly righteous king and will fulfill God's covenant purpose for Israel, bringing it and all nations to God's final righteousness (Ps. 72; Isa. 9:7; 11:3-5; 42:6; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16; Zech. 9:9).

NT Usage

Much of the NT is taken up with the purpose of showing that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the promised Messiah, and thus God's purposes of righteousness and salvation are spoken of as centered in him. Understandably, then, we find righteousness closely linked to the NT theme of the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:10; 6:33; 13:43; Rom. 14:17), a kingdom and a righteousness for which John the Baptist prepared the way and which Jesus as the righteous Son and Redeemer brings to fulfillment (Matt. 3:15; 5:17-20; 21:32; Acts 3:14, 25-26).

Jesus spoke of a false righteousness which is found in those who trust in themselves as righteous or justified because of their moral accomplishments (Matt. 23:28; Luke 16:15; 18:9), but he taught that the truly justified are those who acknowledge their sin and trust in God for forgiveness and his righteousness (Matt. 5:36; Mark 2:17; Luke 18:14).

Again the forensic understanding of righteousness is the key, and this is brought out most fully by Paul. Following the teaching of Christ, Paul explains that no one seeking to be righteous by the works of the law can be justified in God's sight, since everyone is a sinner and has fallen short of God's righteous standard (Rom. 3:9-10, 20, 23; Gal. 2:16). Therefore the righteousness of God comes as a gift which we do not merit (Rom. 3:24; 5:15-17), a gracious declaration in which God pronounces righteous the one who puts his faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 13:39; Rom. 3:22; 5:1, 18). In this declaration God forgives the sins of the justified on the basis of Christ's atoning death, so that God himself is vindicated as just in his justification of sinners (Rom. 3:25-26; 5:8-9; cf. I John 1:9; 2:2).

However, the NT makes it clear that the one who by faith is declared righteous also by faith seeks to do the deeds of righteousness and grow in righteousness by God's grace (Rom. 6:12-18; Eph. 4:24; 5:9; Phil. 1:11; Heb. 11; James 2:17-26; I Pet. 2:24; I John 2:29). By this grace God also will bring the justified into a final righteousness (Gal. 5:5; Heb. 12:23; II Pet. 3:13) at the day of Christ when God will judge the whole world (Luke 14:14; Acts 17:31; II Tim. 4:8).

Therefore, as in the OT so also in the NT, God's righteousness, which expresses itself in wrath and judgment against unrepentant sinners (II Thess. 1:5-9; Rom. 2:5-9; Rev. 19:2), triumphs through love in the form of salvation from sin for those who repent and claim God's covenant promise fulfilled in Christ.

Theological Concepts

In systematic theology righteousness or justice is seen, first of all, as an attribute of God's being (one of the moral and communicable attributes), and then derivatively as an attribute of man created in God's image.

God's Righteousness (Justice)

Righteousness is that attribute by which God's nature is seen to be the eternally perfect standard of what is right. It is closely related to God's holiness (or moral perfection), on one hand, and to God's moral law or will as an expression of his holiness, on the other hand. Even though there is no distinction between righteousness and justice in the biblical vocabulary, theologians often use the former to refer to the attribute of God in himself and the latter to refer to the actions of God with respect to his creation. Hence, God's justice is seen in the way he subjects the universe to various laws and endows it with various rights according to the hierarchy of beings he created. This is "legislative justice." In addition there is "distributive justice," in which God maintains the laws and rights by giving everything its due, or responding appropriately to created beings according to their value or place in the universe. His distributive justice with respect to moral creatures is expressed in the punishment of sin or disobedience (retributive justice) and the rewarding of good or obedience (remunerative justice; Rom. 2:5-11). In systematic theology the harmony of God's justice and love is treated primarily under the doctrine of Christ's atonement. In the cross God satisfies the demands of his own justice against our sin, so that by Christ's redemptive act God's "holy love" is seen as both the supreme expression of retributive justice and the supreme expression of forgiving grace.

Man's Righteousness

Doctrinally, human righteousness can be analyzed in the following fourfold way: (1) Original righteousness. God made man upright or morally good (Eccles. 7:29; Gen. 1:31), but man fell from this righteous state into a state of sin. (2) Christ's righteousness. Since Adam's fall Christ is the only human being who has perfectly fulfilled God's moral law and maintained a righteous nature (Matt. 5:17; John 8:29, 46; Heb. 4:15; I Pet. 2:22). Since Christ is the Godman, his righteousness is of infinite value, affording salvation for all who believe. (3) Imputed righteousness (justification). Justification is that step in salvation in which God declares the believer righteous. Protestant theology has emphasized that this includes the imputation of Christ's righteousness (crediting it to the believer's "account"), whereas Roman Catholic theology emphasizes that God justifies in accord with an infused righteousness merited by Christ and maintained by the believer's good works. (4) Renewed righteousness (sanctification). Having been declared righteous, the believer grows in the likeness of Christ (being renewed in the image of God) and becomes righteous in actual moral character, i.e., he becomes sanctified. Most theologians hold that sanctification is progressive and not complete in this earthly life.

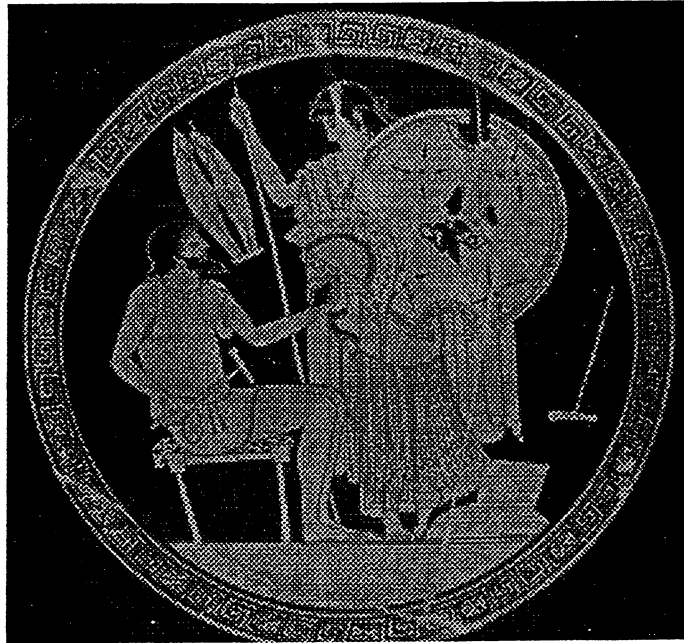
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Nicomachean Ethics V: Justice (*Dikaiosune*)



This vase, from the [Perseus](#) web site, depicts Hephaistos giving Thetis the armor he has made for her son Achilles. The shield, according to Book XVIII of the *Iliad*, depicts among other things the administration of justice in the case of a man who was killed.

After spending about a book and a half of the Ethics discussing various *aretai* (virtues or excellences) - courage (*andreia*), self-control or moderation (*sophrosune*), etc. - Aristotle now spends an entire book on just one *arete*, namely *dikaiosune* (justice). He presents some reasons for giving this one special treatment: there are several senses of *dikaiosune*, all important for a discussion of *arete*; one of these senses can be characterized as "complete *arete*, not in an unqualified sense, but in relation to our fellow humans" (ch. 1, 1129b25; p. 114); *dikaiosune* takes on a very important extra sense in a society of free and (in some though not all senses) equal people "who share a common life in order that their association bring them self-sufficiency" (ch. 6, 1134a25; p. 129)⁽¹⁾; *dikaiosune* is commonly understood to have a clear connection to the idea of a "mean" or middle point, and Aristotle's sketch of the nature of *arete* in general had proposed that *arete* "consists in observing the mean relative to us" (Bk. II, ch. 6, 1106b35; p. 43).

These reasons may not make much sense to the modern reader at first, and that may be because Aristotle has left out something important: his working conception of the basic character of *dikaiosune* and its relationship to the basic needs and requirements of a political society, or its relationship to what makes a society possible and what makes a society viable. To be fair to Aristotle, I would point out that readers in his place and time would not have needed this further information; they would have shared the conception of *dikaiosune* that Aristotle hints at. For the modern (or post-modern?) reader, then, here is some background that may be helpful.

I. Justice (*dikaiosune*) and Justice (*dike*)

A. Grammatical relationship. Greek has two words that are generally translated into English as 'justice.' The words are related in the following way.

Where your text is discussing the *arete* (virtue, excellence) that translates as 'justice,' the Greek word is '*dikaiosune*.' This word refers to the (human) characteristic of being just; a more exact but grammatically less correct translation would be 'justness.'

We use the word 'justice' in another sense, however, when we talk about "the justice system" or getting a degree in "Criminal Justice," or when we say, "No justice - no peace." In those cases we are talking about a fundamental feature of the universe or of a society. '*Dike*' can also be translated as 'balance,' 'order,' 'right,' and 'appropriate way' (of something or someone).

Another way of translating makes the difference more clear: '*dikaiosune*' is sometimes translated as 'righteousness,' and '*dike*' is sometimes translated as 'right.'

A third term connects these two: the word for 'just' or 'righteous' is '*dikaios*.' Where your text mentions 'what is just' or 'the just,' or describes something or someone as 'just,' the term it is translating is '*dikaios*.' Thus a person who has *dikaiosune* is one who does *dikaio*things (for the right reasons, and therefore is *dikaios* him/herself). In doing *dikaio*things and in manifesting *dikaiosune*, the person is doing what *dike* requires, and helping his/her society maintain its overall social/political *dike* (justice, balance, order).

B. Conceptual background.

An understanding of what '*dike*' meant to the ancient Greeks can provide some hints as to why *dikaiosune* would be so central to a discussion of *arete*, especially in *arete*'s relation to the question of how to maintain a society that would foster the kinds of lives we would value. An understanding of the meaning and connotations of '*dike*' will also suggest some reasons for Aristotle's claim that in one sense, *dikaiosune* is complete *arete*.

In The Justice of Zeus Hugh Lloyd-Jones remarks that *dike* is the order of the universe, and this seems me to be a fine way to sum things up. *Dike* the goddess enforces *dike*, enforces the overall balance of the universe as well as the balance within societies (which is ideally, or in principle, a function of the order of the universe). For example, the goddess *Dike* regulates the seasons and the cycles of life, so that cold periods are balanced by warm ones (in a specific order, winter-spring-summer-fall), wet periods are balanced by dry ones, birth and growth are balanced by death and decay that feed new birth and growth (plants and animals go through the stages of their lives in a specific order), a given star is in the same position in the sky tonight as it was exactly one year ago tonight, the lengths of the days and nights changes in a regular cycle, and so on. The balance and order thus achieved was called *dike*. Notice that this means that there is a right time for everything (summer comes after spring and before fall, animals cannot breed at birth or in old age, each crop must be planted at a certain time and no other in order to achieve its potential for growth and fruit). There is also a right way, or perhaps a range of right ways, for each thing to function; a right amount of nourishment and sunlight for each living thing to be able to survive and flourish; a right balance in diet in order to achieve health; a right way to balance the needs of one's livestock with the needs of the plants one cultivates; etc. Failure to observe these "right measures," or failure to enforce them, goes against the principle or standard that *Dike* puts in place, and in fact results in illness, early death, failure to thrive, soil stripped of nutrients, etc.

Now, *Dike* was also the enforcer of social or human justice, balance, and order. Cities whose laws failed to manifest *dike*, or cities where lawbreaking and other unfair or unjust behavior (whatever that would be) was allowed to go on would end in disaster, the Greeks thought. It is not hard to see what they might have had in mind. Homer (Iliad 16.388) suggests that the god Zeus will punish cities that allow lawbreaking (the breaking of laws he set down or approved of) to go on. But other writers suggest a

connection between injustice and disaster that is much easier for humans to verify: Hesiod (Works and Days 275-285) says that the mistrust that comes from widespread unpunished breaking of laws and oaths will lead to withdrawal from legitimate commerce (you wouldn't want to trade with someone if there was nothing to prevent that person from cheating you), poverty, and the disintegration of communities and families (and possible capture and enslavement, if you had no one to rely on to help against invaders). Solon fragment 4 proposes a similar scenario. Notice too that the transgressions of the wrongdoers produce an imbalance: one or more parties to an agreement do not keep their promises, so the reciprocity and exchange that support the society are lost, the community cannot maintain itself, etc. Punishing crimes or exacting restitution (a secondary meaning of '*dike*' is 'penalty') is supposed to restore balance. Today one sometimes hears the idea that those who commit a crime must "pay their debt to society" by serving jail time or paying fines or doing some sort of community service; this is very much in keeping with the Greek idea.⁽²⁾

Thus social *dike* was supposed to reflect, or to be a function of, cosmic *dike*, as I have noted. Part of what a society needs is determined by basic human needs, climate, and so on; and if there are any features of human psychology and emotional life that are universal or close to it, standards of social *dike* must reflect them or else the society will fall apart. For example, it seems that humans the world over like to see that promises are kept, that contributions to the community and obedience to its rules are rewarded or at least acknowledged, that if one risks life or resources for the community this will be honored or rewarded or acknowledged if possible, that friendly relations with other people are possible. Where one or more of these things is not in place, we find that cooperation is lost and hence that its benefits (division of labor and hence efficient production that makes starvation less likely) are lost; communities fall apart or destroy themselves in war or are captured by others; humans live in anxiety and fear all the time. A historical example of the effects of such an imbalance would be the effects of Jim Crow (racially discriminatory) laws in the U.S.

To be *dikaios*, then, a person would have to observe *dike*. That would mean trying to act in a way that acknowledged the fundamental order of things as one went about seeking to fulfill one's own and one's family's needs and desires. What acknowledges the fundamental order of things? - Giving each thing and person its/his/her due, for one thing. This was indeed a common Greek formula for being *dikaios* (see e.g. Plato, Republic 331e). Further, it is partly if not entirely because of *dike* that we need communities: we are the kind of beings who need help to defend ourselves against wild animals and human marauders, we are such that different people are better at different things so we benefit by cooperation, etc. *Dike* would also play a role in determining what our needs were and what kinds of life would really be the most beneficial or fulfilling. As Aristotle says in Book V, ch. 1 (1129b15), "in one sense [of the term '*dikaios*'] those things are said to be just which produce and preserve happiness (*eudaimonia*) and the parts of happiness for the political community." (The Greek differs somewhat from Ostwald's translation here.)

II. Aristotle's accounts of *arete* and *dikaiousune*

To make sense of the notion that *dikaiousune* is in one sense complete *arete*, let us recall Aristotle's descriptions of *arete* in general and of various *aretai* in particular. In Book II, ch. 6 (1106b20) he had said that "to experience [fear, confidence, desire, anger, pity, etc.] at the right time, toward the right objects, toward the right people, for the right reason, and in the best manner - that is the median and the best course, the course that is a mark of *arete*.... Similarly, excess, deficiency, and the median can also be found in actions." As we have seen, the fact that there is a right time, right manner, right object, etc., and the identities of these right things, are functions of *dike*, the order of the universe and/or the order of society. Thus to act from *arete* is to be *dikaios* and to act from *dikaiousune*.

Then in Book III, ch. 7 (1115b15-20), Aristotle characterizes the courageous (*andreios*) person as one who "endures and fears the right things, for the right motive, in the right manner, and at the right time, and who displays confidence in a similar way." Book III, ch. 11 (1119a20): "all the pleasant things that contribute to one's health and well-being [the self-controlled person] desires moderately and in the way one should, and also other pleasures as long as they are neither detrimental to health and well-being nor incompatible with what is noble (beautiful; *kalos*) nor beyond one's means." Book IV, ch. 1 (1120a20-25): "a generous person will give - and give in the correct manner - because that is noble. He/she will give to the right people, the right amount, at the right time, and do everything else that is implied in correct giving." Book IV, ch. 5 (1125b30): the gentle (*praos*) person gets angry "under the right circumstances and with the right people, and also in the right manner, at the right time, and for the right length of time." There are of course other examples of this sort of formulation; I've only included a few, just to show the pattern.

The "right way," "right time," "right amount," etc. would be determined by *dike*: these would be the way, amount, time, etc. that were appropriate to the situation and the agent, and that would achieve the proper balance in the society. For example, the generous person will be restoring as much as possible the balance of resources; if a person gives more than he/she can afford, that leads to another imbalance that must be righted, and according to Aristotle the giver has not been "generous" but has failed to observe the middle point between stinginess and extravagance. If he/she gives more than the recipient knows what to do with, or more than the recipient needs, this too could have troublesome consequences: the recipient might become overly dependent; other people might become envious; the recipient might never be able to repay the giver and would always be in debt or disadvantage (might be in thrall to the giver for a lifetime), and so on. On the other hand, if the giver can afford to give what is needed but deliberately gives less, this leaves a need and in some sense signals that the well-being of the giver's fellow humans and his/her city are not of great value or priority to the giver. The person who gives to another simply for the sake of honor or reputation is also not generous and also creates imbalance, for this person will not give when there will be no public acknowledgment. He/she will give not when it is needed, but only when he/she will be praised.

When laws have been framed "correctly" (whatever that means), says Aristotle in Bk. V, ch. 1 (1129b25 or so), then whatever they require - courageous acts, generous acts, etc., each under particular circumstances - will be "just." And thus in this case and in this sense, all *aretai* will be forms of *dikaiosune*. Of course, there is another sense in which *dikaiosune* is one among many *aretai*.

III. Dikaiosune and the mean

In chapters 2-6, Aristotle discusses what we would call retributive justice (involving penalties and restitutions for crimes or offenses or lapses in fairness) and distributive justice (making sure exchanges of goods and services are fair or equitable). Note that these both involve finding the right degrees or right amounts to achieve balance. In this way *dikaiosune* exhibits perhaps more clearly than any other *arete* the connection with the idea of a mean or middle point.

IV. The "right this," the "right that" - what is "the right thing"?

Aristotle still has not identified anything specific as the "right" action or attitude to take in any specific situation. He also hasn't shown that any such "rightness" exists. *But in order to have any kind of social order that will even enable us to try to find out what if anything is the "right thing to do" and the "best way to live," we have to start from the notion that some things are worthwhile and that we can cooperate and agree on (perhaps provisional) rules for trying to obtain those things.* Perhaps, as Socrates says in the *Apology*, if you don't know what is best (or whether anything is best?), the next-best way to live is to investigate the question of excellence and what is best.

NOTES

1. See Ostwald's note on the "equality" that Aristotle has in mind. To see what "proportionate equality" might mean, consider that in the kind of "aristocracy" (literally, "rule by the best"), the aristocrats would have to prove their merit as rulers, and with their greater rights and privileges they would have greater burdens and responsibilities: supplying weapons, horses, ships, and training to the poor farmers of their community; leading armies (made up of these farmers) into battle; adjudicating disputes without taking bribes; negotiating treaties; promoting and rewarding brave soldiers and good citizens; etc. In this way the lower strata of the society have fewer rights and privileges (but not none, otherwise they would not be free), but also fewer and less difficult and dangerous civic duties. The upper strata have greater rights and privileges because they are the ones who have shown that they can handle these well; they are rewarded for their greater contributions. But they also have more responsibilities, and more of the fate of the community rests on their decisions and actions. (In principle, in this sort of society, if a person from the lower strata shows great valor or great ability at something else important to the survival of the community, he or she will be honored and compensated, and would be able to be "promoted" to a higher stratum. If this person did not move up socially, he/she would have little or no incentive to use his/her talent in ways the community needs, so it is in the interest of the community to move the person up.)

As for "self-sufficiency," what Aristotle seems to mean is "being independent and self-supporting": a community is "self-sufficient" if it does not depend on other communities or individuals for its economic or political existence.

2. Further references to *dike* and *Dike* in earlier Greek thought, references that Aristotle would have been familiar with: Homer, *Odyssey* 11.218, 19.43, 19.168, 24.255; most of Hesiod's *Works and Days* is concerned with showing why it is important to follow *dike*; the Anaximander fragment (cosmic *adikia*, injustice, must be righted by the paying of *dike kai tisis*, penalty and restitution); Heracleitus fragments B80 and B94 DK; Parmenides B1.28 and B8.14 DK.

Home

Two Kinds of Righteousness

By
The Reverend Father
Martin Luther

Brethren, "have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of god, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" [Phil. 2:5-6]

There are two kinds of Christian righteousness, just as man's sin is of two kinds.

The first is alien righteousness, that is the righteousness of another, instilled from without. This is the righteousness of Christ by which he justifies through faith, as it is written in I Cor. 1:30: "whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption." In John 11:25-26, Christ himself states: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me.....shall never die." Later he adds in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." This righteousness, then, is given to men in baptism and whenever they are truly repentant. Therefore a man can with confidence boast in Christ and say: "Mine are Christ's living, doing, and speaking, his suffering and dying, mine as much as if I had lived, done, spoken, suffered, and died as he did." Just as a bridegroom possesses all that is his bride's and she all that is his—for the two have all things in common because they are one flesh [Gen. 2:24]—so Christ and the church are one spirit [Eph. 5:29-32]. Thus the blessed God and Father of mercies has, according to Peter, granted to us very great and precious gifts in Christ [II Pet. 1:4]. Paul writes in II Cor. 1:3; "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."

This inexpressible grace and blessing was long ago promised to Abraham in Gen. 12:3; "And in thy seed (that is in Christ) shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Isaiah 9:6 says, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given." "To us," it says, because he is entirely ours with all his benefits if we believe in him, as we read in Rom. 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" Therefore everything which Christ has is ours, graciously bestowed on us unworthy men out of God's sheer mercy, although we have rather deserved wrath and condemnation, and hell also. Even Christ himself, therefore, who says he came to do the most sacred will of his Father [John 6:38], became obedient to him; and whatever he did, he did it for us and desired it to be ours, saying, "I am among you as one who serves" [Luke 22:27]. He also states, "This is my body, which is given for you" [Luke 22:19]. Isaiah 43:24 says, "You have burdened me with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities."

Through faith in Christ, therefore, Christ's righteousness becomes our righteousness and all that he has becomes ours; rather, he himself becomes ours. Therefore the Apostle calls it "the righteousness of God" in Rom. 1:17; For in the gospel "the righteousness of God is revealed...; as it is written, "The righteous shall live by his faith." Finally, in the same epistle, chapter 3:28, such a faith is called "the righteousness of God": "We hold that a man is justified by faith." This is an infinite righteousness, and one that swallows up all sins in a moment, for it is impossible that sin should exist in Christ. On the contrary, he who trusts in Christ exists in Christ; he is one with Christ, having the same righteousness as he. It is therefore impossible that sin should remain in him. This righteousness is primary; it is the basis, the cause, the source of all our own actual righteousness. For this is the righteousness given in place of the original righteousness lost in Adam. It accomplishes the same as that original righteousness would have accomplished; rather, it accomplishes more.

It is in this sense that we are to understand the prayer in Psalm 30: "in thee, O Lord, do I seek refuge; let me never be put to shame; in thy righteousness deliver me!" It does not say "in my" but "in thy righteousness," that is, in the righteousness of Christ my God which becomes ours through faith and by the grace and mercy of god. In many passages of the Psalter, faith is called "the work of the Lord," "confession," "power of God," "mercy," "truth," "righteousness." All these are names for faith in Christ, rather, for the righteousness which is in Christ. The Apostle therefore dares to say in Gal. 2:20, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." He further states in Eph. 3:14-17: "I bow my

knee before the Father . . . that . . . he may grant . . . that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”

Therefore this alien righteousness, instilled in us without our works by grace alone—while the Father, to be sure, inwardly draws us to Christ—is set opposite original sin, likewise alien, which we acquire without our works by birth alone. Christ daily drives out the old Adam more and more in accordance with the extent to which faith and knowledge of Christ grow. For alien righteousness is not instilled all at once, but it begins, makes progress, and is finally perfected at the end through death.

The second kind of righteousness is our proper righteousness, not because we alone work it, but because we work with that first and alien righteousness. This is that manner of life spent profitably in good works, in the first place, in slaying the flesh and crucifying the desires with respect to the self, of which we read in Gal. 5:24, “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” In the second place, this righteousness consists in love to one’s neighbor, and in the third place, in meekness and fear towards God. The Apostle is full of references to these, as is all the rest of Scripture. He briefly summarizes everything, however, in Titus 2:12, “In this world let us live soberly (pertaining to crucifying one’s own flesh), justly (referring to one’s neighbor), and devoutly (relating to God).”

This righteousness is the product of the righteousness of the first type, actually its fruit and consequence, for we read in Gal. 5:22, “But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.” For because the works mentioned are works of men, it is obvious that in this passage a spiritual man is called “spirit.” In John 3:6 we read, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” This righteousness goes on to complete the first for it ever strives to do away with the old Adam and to destroy the body of sin. Therefore it hates itself and loves its neighbor; it does not seek its own good, but that of another, and in this its whole way of living consists. For in that it hates itself and does not seek its own, it crucifies the flesh. Because it seeks the good of another, it works love. Thus in each sphere it does God’s will living soberly with self, justly with neighbor, devoutly toward God.

This righteousness follows the example of Christ in this respect and is transformed into his likeness. It is precisely this that Christ requires. Just as he himself did all things for us, not seeking his own good but ours only—and in this he was most obedient to God the Father—so he desires that we also should set the same example for our neighbors.

We read in Rom. 6:19 that this righteousness is set opposite our own actual sin: “For just as you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification.” Therefore through the first righteousness arises the voice of the bridegroom who says to the soul, “I am yours,” but through the second comes the voice of the bride who answers, “I am yours.” Then the marriage is consummated; it becomes strong and complete in accordance with the Song of Solomon 2:16, “My beloved is mine and I am his.” Then the soul no longer seeks to be righteous in and for itself, but it has Christ as its righteousness and therefore seeks only the welfare of others. Therefore the Lord of the Synagogue threatens through the prophet “And I will make to cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride” [Jer 7:34].

This is what the text we are now considering says: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” [Phil. 2:5]. This means you should be as inclined and disposed toward one another as you see Christ was disposed toward you. How? Thus, surely, that “though he was in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of servant” [Phil. 2:6-7]. The term “form of God” here does not mean the “essence of God” because Christ never emptied himself of this. Neither can the phrase “form of a servant” be said to mean “human essence.” But the “form of God” is wisdom, power, righteousness, goodness—and freedom too; for Christ was a free, powerful, wise man, subject to none of the vices or sins to which all other men are subject. He was pre-eminent in such attributes as are particularly proper to the form of God. Yet he was not haughty in that form; he did not please himself; nor did he disdain and despise those who were enslaved and subjected to various evils.

He was not like the Pharisee who said, “God, I thank thee that I am not like other men” [Luke 18:11],

for that man was delighted that others were wretched; at any rate he was unwilling that they should be like him. This is the type of robbery by which a man usurps things for himself—rather, he keeps what he has and does not clearly ascribe to God the things that are God's, nor does he serve others with them that he may become like other men. Men of this kind wish to be like god, sufficient in themselves, pleasing themselves, glorying in themselves, under obligation to no one, and so on. Not thus, however, did Christ think; not of this stamp was his wisdom. He relinquished that form to God the Father and emptied himself, unwilling to use his rank against us, unwilling to be different from us. Moreover, for our sakes he became as one of us and took the form of a servant, that is, he subjected himself to all evils. And although he was free, as the Apostle says of himself also, he made himself servant of all, living as if all the evils which were ours were actually his own.

Accordingly he took upon himself our sin and our punishment, and although it was for us that he was conquering those things, he acted as though he were conquering them for himself. Although as far as his relationship to us was concerned, he had the power to be our God and Lord, yet he did not will it so, but rather desired to become our servant, as it is written in Rom. 15:1-3, "We...ought...not to please ourselves...For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me.'" The quotation from the Psalmist has the same meaning as the citation from Paul.

.... The Apostle means that each individual Christian shall become the servant of another in accordance with the example of Christ. If one has wisdom, righteousness, or power with which one can excel others and boast in the "form of God," so to speak, one should not keep all this to himself, but surrender it to God and become altogether as if he did not possess it [II Cor. 6:10], as one of those who lack it.

Paul's meaning is that when each person has forgotten himself and emptied himself of God's gifts, he should conduct himself as if his neighbor's weakness, sin, and foolishness were his very own. He should not boast or get puffed up. Nor should he despise or triumph over his neighbor as if he were his god or equal to God. Since God's prerogatives ought to be left to God alone, it becomes robbery when a man in haughty foolhardiness ignores this fact. It is in this way, then that one takes the form of a servant, and that command of the Apostle in Gal. 5:13 is fulfilled: "Through love be servants of one another." Through the figure of the members of the body Paul teaches in Rom. 12:4-5 and I Cor. 12:12-27 how the strong, honorable, healthy members do not glory over those that are weak, less honorable, and sick as if they were their masters and gods; but on the contrary they serve them the more, forgetting their own honor, health, and power. For thus no member of the body serves itself; nor does it seek its own welfare but that of the other. And the weaker, the sicker, the less honorable a member is, the more the other members serve it "that there may be no discord in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another," to use Paul's words [I Cor. 12:25]. From this it is now evident how one must conduct himself with his neighbor in each situation.

.... [W]henever we, on the ground of our righteousness, wisdom, or power, are haughty or angry with those who are unrighteous, foolish, or less powerful than we . . . —and this is the greatest perversion—righteousness works against righteousness, wisdom against wisdom, power against power. For you are powerful, not that you may make the weak weaker by oppression, but that you may make them powerful by raising them up and defending them. You are wise, not in order to laugh at the foolish and thereby make them more foolish, but that you may undertake to teach them as you yourself would wish to be taught. You are righteous that you may vindicate and pardon the unrighteous, not that you may only condemn, disparage, judge, and punish. For this is Christ's example for us, as he says, "For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John 3:17). He further says in Luke 9:55-56, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of; for the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives but to save them."

But the carnal nature of man violently rebels, for it greatly delights in punishment, in boasting of its own righteousness, and in its neighbor's shame and embarrassment at his unrighteousness. Therefore it pleads its own case and it rejoices that this is better than its neighbor's. But it opposes the case of its neighbor and wants it to appear mean. This perversity is wholly evil, contrary to love, which does not

seek its own good, but that of another. It ought to be distressed that the condition of its neighbor is not better than its own. It ought to wish that its neighbor's condition were better than its own, and if its neighbor's condition is the better, it ought to rejoice no less than it rejoices when its own is the better. "For this is the law and the prophets" [Matt. 7:12].

But you say, "Is it not permissible to chasten evil man? Is it not proper to punish sin? Who is not obliged to defend righteousness? To do otherwise would give occasion for lawlessness."

I answer: A single solution to this problem cannot be given. Therefore one must distinguish among men. For men can be classified either as public or private individuals.

The things which have been said do not pertain at all to public individuals, that is to those who have been placed in a responsible office by God. It is their necessary function to punish and judge evil men, to vindicate and defend the oppressed, because it is not they but God who does this. They are his servants in this very matter, as the Apostle shows at some length in Rom. 13:4, "He does not bear the sword in vain, etc." But this must be understood as pertaining to the cases of other men, not to one's own. For no man acts in God's place for the sake of himself and his own things, but for the sake of others. If, however, a public official has a case of his own, let him ask for someone other than himself to be God's representative, for in that case he is not a judge, but one of the parties. But on these matters let others speak at other times, for it is too broad a subject to cover now.

Private individuals with their own cases are of three kinds. First, there are those who seek vengeance and judgment from the representatives of God, and of these there is now a very great number. Paul tolerates such people, but he does not approve of them when he says in I Cor. 6:12, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful." Rather he says in the same chapter, "To have lawsuits at all with one another is defeat for you." But yet to avoid a greater evil he tolerates this lesser one lest they should vindicate themselves and one should use force on the other, returning evil for evil, demanding their own advantages. Nevertheless such will not enter the kingdom of heaven unless they have changed for the better by forsaking things that are merely lawful and pursuing those that are helpful. For that passion for one's own advantage must be destroyed.

In the second class are those who do not desire vengeance. On the other hand, in accordance with the Gospel [Matt. 5:40], to those who would take their coats, they are prepared to give their cloaks as well, and they do not resist any evil. These are sons of God, brothers of Christ, heirs of future blessings. In Scripture therefore they are called "fatherless," "widows," "desolate"; because they do not avenge themselves, God wishes to be called their "Father" and "Judge" [Ps. 68:5]. Far from avenging themselves, if those in authority should wish to seek revenge in their behalf, they either do not desire it or seek it, or they only permit it. Or, if they are among the most advanced, they forbid and prevent it, prepared rather to lose their other possessions also.

Suppose you say, "Such people are very rare, and who would be able to remain in this world were he to do this?" I answer: This is not a discovery of today, that few are saved and that the gate is narrow leads to life and those who find it are few [Matt. 7:14]. But if none were doing this, how would the Scripture stand which calls all the poor, the orphans, and the widows "the people of Christ?" Therefore those in this second class grieve more over the sin of their offenders than over the loss or offense to themselves. And they do this that they may recall those offenders from their sin rather than avenge the wrongs they themselves have suffered. Therefore they put off the form of their own righteousness and put on the form of those others, praying for their persecutors, blessing those who curse, doing good to evil-doers, prepared to pay the penalty and make satisfaction for their very enemies that they may be saved [Matt. 5:44]. This is the gospel and the example of Christ [Luke 23:34].

In the third class are those who in persuasion are like the second type just mentioned, but are not like them in practice. They are the ones who demand back their own property or seek punishment to be meted out, not because they seek their own advantage, but through the punishment and restoration of their own things they seek the betterment of the one who has stolen or offended. They discern that the offender cannot be improved without punishment. These are called "zealots" and the Scriptures praise them. But no one ought to attempt this unless he is mature and highly experienced in the second class just mentioned, lest he mistake wrath for zeal and be convicted of doing from anger and impatience that which he believes he is doing from love of justice. For anger is like zeal, and impatience is like love of justice so that they cannot be sufficiently distinguished except by the most spiritual. Christ exhibited such zeal when he made a whip and cast out the sellers and buyers from the temple, as related in John 2:14-17. Paul did likewise when he said, "Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness? [I Cor. 4:21].

FINIS



ROMANS 3

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

1343

Righteousness

STRONG'S

1342. δικαιοσύνη δικαιοσύνη, dik-ah-yos; from 1343; equitable (in character or act); by impl. innocent, holy (absol. or rel.)—just, meet, right (-ness).

1343. δικαιοσύνη δικαιοσύνη, dik-ah-yos; from 1342; equity (of character or act); spec. (Chr.) justification—righteousness.

1344. δικαιοσύνη δικαιοσύνη, dik-ah-yo-s; from 1342; to render (i.e. show or regard as) just or innocent—free, justify (-ies), be righteous.

1345. δικαιοσύνη δικαιοσύνη, dik-ah-yo-mah; from 1344; an equitable deed; by impl. a statute or decision—judgment, justification, ordinance, righteousness.

1346. δικαιοσύνη δικαιοσύνη, dik-ah-yoce; adv. from 1342; equitably—justly, (to) righteously (-ness).

1347. δικαιοσύνη δικαιοσύνη, dik-ah-yo-sis; from 1344; acquittal (for Christ's sake)—justification.

1348. δικαιοσύνη δικαιοσύνη, dik-as-tace; from a det. of 1343; a judge—judge.

1349. δικαιοσύνη δικαιοσύνη, dek-ah; prob. from 1166; right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution)—judgment, punish, vengeance.

δικαιοσύνη, -ης, ἡ, (δικαίος); most frequently in Sept. for πρῆξ and πρῆξι, rarely for ὑπῆξι; the virtue or quality or state of one who is δικαίος; 1. in the broad sense, the state of him who is such as he ought to be, righteousness (Germ. Rechtschaffenheit); the condition acceptable to God (Germ. Gottwohlgefälligkeit); a. univ.: λόγος τῆς δικαιοσύνης (like λόγος τῆς ἀγαθότητος, λ. τοῦ σταυροῦ), the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain to a state approved of God, Heb. v. 13; βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης, the king who himself has the approbation of God, and who renders his subjects acceptable to God, Heb. vii. 2; cf. Bleek ad loc. (b. integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting: Mt. iii. 15; v. 6, 10, 20; vi. 1 GLT Tr; WH; Acts xiii. 10; xxiv. 25; Ro. vi. 13, 16, 18-20 (opp. to ἀμαρτία, ἁμαρτία, and ἀκαθαρσία); Ro. viii. 10 (opp. to ἀμαρτία); Ro. xiv. 17 (? [see c.]); 2 Co. vi. 7, 14 (opp. to ἀνομία, as in Xen. mem. 1, 2, 24); 2 Co. xi. 15; Eph. v. 9; vi. 14; Phil. i. 11; 1 Tim. vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 22; iii. 16; iv. 8; Tit. iii. 5; Heb. i. 9; xii. 11; Jas. iii. 18; 1 Pet. iii. 14; 2 Pet. ii. 5, 21; iii. 13, and very often in the O. T.; ἐν δόξῃ δικαιοσύνης, walking in the way of righteousness i. q. an upright, righteous, man, Mt. xxi. 32; τοῦ θεοῦ, the righteousness which God demands, Mt. vi. 33; Jas. i. 20; of righteousness which manifests itself in beneficence: 2 Co. ix. 9 sq. (cf. Tob. xiv. 11; Gesenius, Thesaur. iii. p. 1151; so Chald. πρῆξι, Dan. iv. 24, and in the Talmud and rabbin. writ. [Buxtorf. col. 1891 (p. 341 ed. Fischer); cf. W. 32]); where δικ. καὶ δόξης are connected, — Lk. i. 75; Eph. iv. 24, (Sap. ix. 3; Clem. Rom. 1 Cor. 48, 4 and occasionally in prof. writ.), — the former denotes right conduct towards men, the latter piety towards God (cf. Plat. Gorg. p. 507 b.; Grimm on Sap. p. 181 sq.; [cf. Trench G. lxxviii. p. 328 sq.; for additional exx. see Wetst. on Eph. i. c.; cf. δόξος]; ἐν δόξῃ α. δικαιοσύνη, Diod. 1, 2); ποιῆν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, to do righteousness, to live uprightly: 1 Jn. ii. 29; iii. 7; iii. 10 [not Lchm.]; and in Rev. xxii. 11 acc. to the text not accepted; in like manner ἐργάζεσθαι δικαιοσύνην, Acts x. 35; Heb. xi. 33; ζῆν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ, to live, devote the life, to righteousness, 1 Pet. ii. 24; πληροῦν πάντα δικαιοσύνην, to perform completely whatever is right, Mt. iii. 15. When affirmed of Christ, δικαιοσύνη denotes his perfect moral purity, integrity, sinlessness: Jn. xvi. 8, 10; when used of God, his holiness: Ro. iii. 5, 25 sq. c. in the writings of PAUL ἡ δικαιοσύνη has a peculiar meaning, opposed to the views of the Jews and Judaizing Christians. To understand this meaning, the foll. facts esp. must be kept in view: the Jews as a people, and very many who had become converts from among them to Christianity, supposed that they secured the favor of God by works conformed to the requirements of the Mosaic law, as though by way of merit; and that they would thus attain to eternal salvation. But this law demands perfect obedience to all its precepts, and threatens condemnation to those who do not render such obedience (Gal. iii. 10, 12). Obedience of this kind no one has rendered (Ro. iii. 10), neither Jews nor Gentiles (Ro. i. 24 — ii. 1), — for with the latter the natural law of right written on their souls takes the place of the Mosaic law (Ro. ii. 14 sq.). On this account Paul proclaims the love of God, in that by giving up Christ, his Son, to die as an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men he has attested his grace and good-will to mankind, so that they can hope for salvation as if they had not sinned. But the way to obtain this hope, he teaches, is only through faith (see πίστις [esp. 1 b. and d.]), by which a man appropriates that grace of God revealed and pledged in Christ; and this faith is reckoned by God to the man as δικαιοσύνη; that is to say, ἡ denotes the state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's possession through that faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ (see δικαιοσύνη, 3 b.). In this sense ἡ δικαιοσύνη is used without an adjunct in Ro. iv. 5 sq. 11; v. 17, 21; ix. 30 sq.; Ro. xiv. 17 (? [see b.]); 1 Co. i. 30; Gal. v. 5; δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη, the righteousness which God ascribes, what God declares to be righteousness [W. 186 (175)], Ro. i. 17; iii. 21; x. 3; by a pregnant use, equiv. to that divine arrangement by which God leads men to a state acceptable to him, Ro. x. 4; as abstract for concrete, equiv. to those whom God accounts righteous, 2 Co. x. 21; καὶ θεοῦ διὰ πίστιν, Ro. iii. 22; ἡ δικαιοσύνη

RIGHTEOUSNESS

1. dikaiosunē (δικαιοσύνη, 1343) is "the character or quality of being right or just"; it was formerly spelled "rightwiseness," which clearly expresses the meaning. It is used to denote an attribute of God, e.g., Rom. 3:5, the context of which shows that "the righteousness of God" means essentially the same as His faithfulness or truthfulness, that which is consistent with His own nature and promises; Rom. 3:25; 26 speaks of His "righteousness" as exhibited in the death of Christ, which is sufficient to show men that God is neither indifferent to sin nor regards it lightly. On the contrary, it demonstrates that quality of holiness in Him which must find expression in His condemnation of sin.

"Dikaiosunē is found in the sayings of the Lord Jesus, (a) of whatever is right or just in itself, whatever conforms to the revealed will of God, Matt. 5:6, 10, 20; John 16:8, 10; (b) whatever has been appointed by God to be acknowledged and obeyed by man, Matt. 3:15; 21:32; (c) the sum total of the requirements of God, Matt. 6:33; (d) religious duties, Matt. 6:1 (distinguished as almsgiving, man's duty to his neighbor, vv. 2-4, prayer, his duty to God, vv. 5-15, fasting, the duty of self-control, vv. 16-18).

"In the preaching of the apostles recorded in Acts the word has the same general meaning. So also in Jas. 1:20; 3:18, in both Epp. of Peter, 1st John and the Revelation. In 2 Pet. 1:1, 'the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ,' is the righteous dealing of God with sin and with sinners on the ground of the death of Christ. 'Word of righteousness,' Heb. 5:13, is probably the gospel, and the Scriptures as containing the gospel, wherein is declared the righteousness of God in all its aspects.

"This meaning of dikaiosunē, right action, is frequent also in Paul's writings, as in all five of its occurrences in Rom. 6; Eph. 6:14, etc. But for the most part he uses it of that gracious gift of God to men whereby all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are brought into right relationship with God. This righteousness is unattainable by obedience to any law, or by any merit of man's own, or any other condition than that of faith in Christ. . . . The man who trusts in Christ becomes 'the righteousness of God in Him,' 2 Cor. 5:21, i.e., becomes in Christ all that God requires a man to be, all that he could never be in himself. Because Abraham accepted the Word of God, making it his own by that act of the mind and spirit which is called faith, and, as the sequel showed, submitting himself to its control, therefore God accepted him as one who fulfilled the whole of His requirements, Rom. 4:3. . . .

"Righteousness is not said to be imputed to the believer save in the sense that faith is imputed ('reckoned' is the better word) for righteousness. It is clear that in Rom. 4:6, 11, 'righteousness reckoned' must be understood in the light of the context, 'faith reckoned for righteousness,' vv. 3, 5, 9, 22. 'For' in these places is eis, which does not mean 'instead of,' but 'with a view to.' The faith thus exercised brings the soul into vital union with God in Christ, and inevitably produces righteousness of life, that is, righteousness as the will of God."

WEBSTER'S

equi-ty (ek'wə tē), n., pl. -ties. 1. fairness; justice: *The judge was noted for the equity of his decisions.* 2. what is fair and just: *In all equity, he should pay for the damage he did.* 3. a. fairness in the adjustment of conflicting interests. b. a system of rules and principles, based on fairness and justice. Equity sup-
just (jūst), *adj.* 1. right; fair: *a just price, a just principal.* 2. just but severe law (Shakespeare). 3. righteous: *a just life.* *The just man walketh in his integrity* (Proverbs 20:7). 4. deserved; merited: *a just reward.* 5. having good grounds; well-founded: *just anger, a just opinion.* 6. lawful: *a just claim.* *Our just inheritance* (Milton). 6. in accord-
ance with standards or requirements; proper: *just proportions.* 7. true; correct:
im-par-tial (im pār'shəl), *adj.* showing no more favor to one side than to the other; fair: *just.* — **im-par'tial-ly**, *adv.* — **im-par'tial-ness**, n. — **Syn.** unbiased, unpreju-
diced, equitable. See fair.
im-par-ti-al-ty (im pār shē al'ə tē), n. fairness; justice; not taking sides.

HOLINESS, n. [from holy.] The state of being holy; purity or integrity of moral character; freedom from sin; sanctity. *Applied to the Supreme Being, holiness denotes perfect purity or integrity of moral character, one of his essential attributes.* *Who is like thee, glorious in holiness?* Ex.

2. Applied to human beings, holiness is purity of heart or dispositions; sanctified affec-tions; piety; moral goodness, but not perfect.
 We see piety and holiness ridiculed as morose singularities. Rogers.

RIGHT, v. t. To do justice to; to relieve from wrong; as, to right an injured person. Taylor.

2. In seamen's language, to right a ship, is to restore her to an upright position from a careen.
To right the helm, to place it in the middle of the ship.

RIGHT, v. i. To rise with the masts erect, as a ship.

RIGHTED, *pp.* Relieved from injustice; set upright.

RIGHTEN, v. t. [Sax. *gerihtan.*] To do justice to. *Obs.*

RIGHTEOUS, a. ri'chus. [Sax. *rihtise;* right and wise, manner, as in *otherwise, lengthwise.*]

1. Just; accordant to the divine law. Applied to persons, it denotes one who is ho-ly in heart, and observant of the divine commands in practice; as a righteous man. Applied to things, it denotes consonant to the divine will or to justice; as a righteous act. It is used chiefly in theology, and applied to God, to his testimonies and to his saints.

The righteous, in Scripture, denote the ser-vants of God, the saints.

2. Just; equitable; merited.
And I thy righteous doom will bless. Dryden.

RIGHTEOUSLY, *adv.* ri'chusly. Justly; in accordance with the laws of justice; equi-tably; as a criminal *righteously* condemn-ed.

Thou shalt judge the people righteously. Ps. lvii.

RIGHTEOUSNESS, n. ri'chusness. Puri-ty of heart and rectitude of life; conform-ity of heart and life to the divine law. *Righteousness, as used in Scripture and theology, in which it is chiefly used, is nearly equivalent to holiness, compre-hending holy principles and affections of heart, and conformity of life to the divine law.* It includes all we call justice, hon-esty and virtue, with holy affections; in short, it is true religion.

2. Applied to God, the perfection or holiness of his nature; exact rectitude; faithful-ness.

3. The active and passive obedience of Christ, by which the law of God is fulfilled. Dan. ix.

4. Justice; equity between man and man.

ROMANS 3

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

MAT 6

32 (For after all these things do the Gen-tiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

MAT 5

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

I COR 6

21 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.

PHIL 1

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowl-edge and in all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

HEB 12

11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

ROMANS 6

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

EPH 5

8 For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light;

9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth,)

10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

I PET 3

13 And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled:

II TIM 4

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

II PET 3

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

13 Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.