

Everlasting Righteousness

The word “**righteousness**” is a very important word in the Bible. The word “righteousness” and its counterpart “righteous” appear 540 times in the Bible.

The Biblical definition of “righteousness” is: ***the quality of being right in the eyes of God including character (nature), conscience (attitude), conduct (actions), and command (word).***

A short and more concise definition is simply being in a right relationship with God. Righteousness has to affect every aspect of our lives. How is anyone ever able to attain this kind of righteousness? It only comes through the blood of Jesus.

The purpose of the Old Testament Law was to teach God’s people how to live righteously. **(Deuteronomy 6:25)** The Law revealed the character of God and what pleases Him.

Because of the hardness of their hearts, the Israelites were constantly disregarding the Laws of God given to them. We read over and over again how they were constantly hardening their hearts against the Lord choosing rather to worship other gods and be influenced by the other nations around them that knew not God. **(Judges 2:10-12-just one example)** In **Galatians 3:19**, we read that the Law was given because of the transgressions of the people. It was a schoolmaster to illustrate what is an acceptable lifestyle to God. **(Galatians 3:24)** The Law showed them exactly what sin was. **(Romans 5:20)**

In the Bible, we read about several people who were “**righteous**” or “**just**” in the eyes of God. **(Genesis 7:1, Galatians 3:6, Ezekiel 14:14)** They were called righteous because their lives were filled with choices.

They chose to put God first in their lives and to turn their back on sin and do the right thing. However, even though their actions were righteous, they still fell short of the “**perfect sinless righteousness**” of God.

The Bible tells us that all men are sinners who fall short of the righteousness of God. (**Romans 5:12, Ecclesiastes 7:20**) There is light at the end of the tunnel.

The Lord spoke through the mouth of His Prophets about a time when He would put a new heart and a new spirit within His people. This new heart would desire to walk in the ways of the Lord. (**Ezekiel 11:19-20**) The question is, when would this happen and how would this happen?

In **Romans 8:3-6**, we read that Jesus came to do what the Law could not do. Jesus condemned sin in the flesh so that the righteousness of the Law could be fulfilled in us. Jesus is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. (**Romans 10:4**)

It is only through Jesus that we can bring forth fruits of righteousness. (**Philippians 1:11**) He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. (**2 Corinthians 5:21**)

The most important question of all is:

“How can I attain this righteousness?”

“How can I be righteous in the eyes of God?”

This question deserves a Biblical answer.

The final instructions that Jesus gave to His Disciples were to go and preach and teach all nations and every creature. Whoever believed and was baptized, would be saved. (**Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16**)

Jesus told Nicodemus that he had to be born again of the water and of the Spirit. (**John 3:3,5,7**) After His resurrection, Jesus opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. (**Luke 24:45**)

After His resurrection, Jesus also spent another 40 days with the Disciples speaking and teaching them things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. (**Acts 1:3**)

He wanted to make sure that the Disciples had a very clear understanding exactly what this Gospel message was. Jesus also told the Disciples that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit very soon. With this Holy Spirit baptism would come power to be witnesses of this great Gospel message to all. (**Acts 1:8**)

Just as Jesus said, the disciples along with over one hundred and twenty other believers did receive the gift of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. **(Acts 2:1-4)**

These same Disciples that Jesus had so diligently prepared then went everywhere teaching and preaching the wonderful Gospel message. Peter, the man to whom Jesus gave the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven, was the one who preached the first sermon on the Day of Pentecost. **(Matthew 16:18-19)**

The hearers were moved by Peter's words and had an intense desire to accept and believe that Jesus Christ was, in fact, their long-awaited Messiah. Because of this, they asked Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "***Men and brethren, what shall we do?***" They too wanted to be in a "**right state**" with God. They wanted to be forgiven.

Peter did **NOT** pray with them a "sinner's" prayer. Peter did **NOT** have them repeat a certain prayer or words. Peter did **NOT** tell them "To accept Jesus as their personal Savior".

Peter did tell them what they had to do. Yes, they had to **DO** something. Peter told them first **repent**; then to **be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ** for the remission of sins, and then to **receive the gift of the Holy Spirit** just as they all had just done earlier that same day. **(Acts 2:37-39)**

This is the Biblical answer to the questions,

- ***"How can I attain righteousness?"***
- ***"How can I be in a 'right state' with God?"***
- ***"How can I receive this new heart?"***

It starts with believing but believing to the point where your faith produces obedience to the directions given in the Word of God.

Conclusion

When you repent, that is make a heart-felt decision to turn your back on sin and to turn toward God, to have your sins washed away through baptism in the Name of Jesus and to receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit with the Biblical evidence of speaking in other tongues, you are born again.

Now you are in a **“right state”** with God. Our original definition of **“righteousness”** at the beginning of this study seemed like a “tall order”, but when one receives a new heart, that new heart ushers into our lives a whole new lifestyle.

The **“righteousness”** that we receive when we are born again is just the beginning. After the initial “born-again” experience, we must live a devoted lifestyle of dedication to God. We must continue to pursue **“righteousness”** in our lives. **(2 Timothy 2:22)**

We must always make the right decisions to maintain **“righteousness”** in our lives; for in doing this, we “lay hold” on Eternal Life. **(1 Timothy 6:11-12)**

Jesus came to bring to you and me **“Everlasting Righteousness”**. **(Daniel 9:24)** This “Everlasting Righteousness” begins with Jesus and ends with Jesus. **(Hebrews 12:2)** It is truly “Everlasting Righteousness” because He is Everlasting.

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