

Righteousness of God and Man

This is Top Topic #2: The Righteousness of God and Man. Perhaps you should be reminded at this beginning of the second lesson that surveys the total Bible under 12 major subjects, and it called the Top 12 Topics of the Bible of the manner in which these topics have been derived from the Bible. These topics with the outline of the sub-topics originated as all the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, with the proper interpretation of them as given in the New Testament. {“no Scripture is of any private interpretation so that in the explanations of these quotes by Apostles and Jesus in the New Testament you therefore have the ASPI, or Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation of the Bible--you can not beat allowing God through the Holy Spirit in the writing of these Scriptures of the Bible to self-interpret those same Scriptures, alias the Bible is divine in origin, absolute and determinative in authority--that is you can not get any higher or better than God Himself as the ultimate authority; sufficient in message for all of living and eternal life, yes also for the pleasing of God and without faith in the Bible it is impossible to please God; high fidelity in communication, never sell God short as He is able to take these 66 books with the thousands of years of efforts from heaven and in cooperation with dedicated Prophets and Apostles, of course also of His own Son while He was never on earth most fully making known the will of God...and what with taking them has the ability to overcome all obstacles in communicating to man, language or otherwise; and finally the Bible is self-

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interpretative, and how lost we would be were it not so as almost everyone has an opinion of what is right or of what is justice and righteousness}

1. Righteousness, you must see, in all ways and always is a major or top topic of the Bible. Not only is a major word of the Bible as you will see by looking it up in any large Concordance of the Bible like YOUNG'S or STRONG'S, but it takes a lot of different words in both the Old Testament and New Testament in order to communicate from God what He has wanted man to know on the subject for years. {A lot of people out of pride and haughtiness try to generate from the wisdom literature of man a Theology that is adequate to communicate God, but since God completed this task of writing the 66 book of the Bible almost two thousand years ago, it is both foolhardily and irreverent to take the replace it. This is how sin God started in the first place in the Garden of Eden as man and woman with the prompting of Satan attempted to replace the will of God with their own opinions.}

(1). For example from YOUNG'S ANALYTICAL CONCORDANCE on "righteous", the source word of course for righteousness, where YOUNG tries to summarize all the distinctness in meaning under "righteous man" or "righteous cause", there are 3 Hebrew words used for righteous in the OT and 1 Greek word in the New Testament.

(a). The Hebrew word "yashar" translated as **upright** or **right**, and already we are starting to get at the very heart of righteousness as what is RIGHT. What is right and what is wrong has been an infinite searching of man and promotion of god. At heart the word righteousness seeks to describe rightness as contrasted to wrongness, of course based on the character, concepts, opinions, and value system of the God of the Universe Who created us. Typical of the other 8 usages of this Hebrew word for righteous in Job, Psalms, and Proverbs is the first in Numbers 23:10 where Balaam, when requested by King Balak to put a curse on Israel as they began to march victoriously into the Promised Land, stated with a oracle from the very mouth of God how could Balaam denounce or curse whom God had not cursed, a God that Balaam could see from the top of the rocks and behold in the hills, a God who can count the dust of Jacob or Israel, even number one-fourth of them; rather Balaam is prompted to say to Balak, that he be allowed to "die the death of the righteous", to have a life and death like that of Jacob himself.

(b). The most predominant Hebrew word used to describe righteous, and a preliminary to the establishment of righteousness on the earth on the part of

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God is the Hebrew word "tsaddiq", literally translated "righteous" or "just". It runs from Genesis to Malachi in 22 out of 39 books of the Old Testament, perhaps the most famous of which is the many references in Genesis where God and the angels sought for just 50 righteous people in Sodom and Gomorrah before those twin cities were destroyed for their obvious unrighteousness.

(c). As in the nature of all Bible and Bible revelations, where it is a gradual revelation of God Himself and His character and perspective, the concept of right and rightness under the leadership of the Holy Spirit evolves by the time of Psalms {David}, Proverbs {Solomon}, and Isaiah {top among the Writing Prophets} where with the Hebrew word "tsedeq" it takes on a meaning of JUSTICE as well as rightness. By the way with the usage of one such in Isaiah 41:2--"Who in righteousness called him to His feet"--an obvious reference to the hope during dark years for the nation of Israel, who in the chapter before of Isaiah has been crying as they so often did that God did not even see them anymore, is the real beginning of the positive and real hope for Israel and the world in the future as Christ comes from the east, and who with a new kingdom starts to reign over kings.

(d). Then we come to the peak of the revealed Word of God on RIGHT, RIGHTEOUS and JUST, of course in the NT and primarily from Jesus as we look at the Greek word "dikaios" found 37 times in the New Testament and in 14 of the 27 books of the NT.

2. Like in so much that Jesus came to earth to teach about God the Father, we learn most from the teachings of Jesus on WHAT IS RIGHT according to God.

(1). We are at first shocked when we read from Jesus in Matthew 9:13 that Jesus came to call sinners to repentance not the righteous already, where Jesus encourages the most religious people that have ever lived, the Pharisees, to go and learn what He meant as He was explaining His quote from Hosea 6:6 about how God "desires mercy not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6 and Matthew 9:13). There is much depth to understand from these passages alone on right, righteousness, and what God expects from man on rightness; but surely if nothing else we must see that as Jesus said later that "righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees" (Matthew 5:20); also that salvation is by mercy and grace which eliminates any sacrifice to please God like works of righteousness for salvation.

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(2). Jesus tells in Matthew 13:17 of how the people during His lifetime and teachings on earth had the benefit of hearing and seeing what "many prophets and righteous men" before them desired to see and hear, the important truth for our current TOP TOPIC of RIGHTEOUSNESS under Bible discussion and study is that like Prophets there were many other righteous men in the OT.

NOTE: One fear we must get over as church members and Christians in our contemporary society is the fear of sainthood, holiness, and righteousness. For whether you come to describe either the essentials of salvation or of Christian life and living, you must face up to the God-given spiritual realities of the necessity of true rightness of RIGHTEOUSNESS.

3. Like RIGHTEOUS, the derivative word of "righteousness" as many fine points of meaning, 3 in the Hebrew of the Old Testament and 4 in the Greek of the New Testament: "tsedeg" for rightness and justice; "tsedaqah" also for rightness and justice; "tsidqah" for rightness and justice; "dikaiosune" for rightness and justice, used in the NT 9 times by Jesus, in Acts 4 times, and of course almost innumerable times in Romans by Paul which some commentators like to describe under the title of "The Righteousness of God", and certainly one of the major subjects of that book; however Paul also uses it 30 more times in the writing of 9 other NT books--first and second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, first and second Timothy, Titus and Hebrews, also other Apostles like James, Peter, and John use this same word 13 more times; in Romans and Revelation and with the Greek word "dikaioma" there is the fine point of distinction of A JUDICIAL SENTENCE; in "dikaios of I Corinthians 15:34 there is a call to awaken issued to humanity to a righteous distinction where the meaning is more UPRIGHTLY, JUSTLY, and RIGHTLY with "Awake to righteousness and sin not...."; and finally in Hebrews 1:8 and with the Greek word "euthutes" there is a distinction of STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS with the "spectre of righteousness".

NOTE: As a preliminary concept of the meaning of righteousness beyond the RIGHTNESS and JUST and JUSTICE that we have already removed by the Bible by exegesis, we can assess the larger concept of righteousness being the opposite of sin, of course recalling that sin often in the Bible is defined as the opposite of righteousness, or unrighteousness.

2-1: The Ten Commandments. (Exodus 20-Exodus 32)

As you suspected when you read the title of this second top topic of the Bible, "The Righteousness of God and Man", the Ten Commandments would be a large

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part of God's demand for righteousness. In fact, you can easily say that this section of the Bible from Exodus and Numbers is dominated by the Ten Commandments as well as the failure of God's own Chosen people, the children of Abraham, Isaac, and of Jacob {Israel} out of Egyptian bondage to keep the covenant with God which the Ten Commandments summarize.

1. General History of Exodus and Leviticus.

The book of Exodus is dominated by that per se, the Exodus of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt 400 years after the death of Jacob or Israel; the subsequent 40 years of wandering in the desert after the giving of the Law and the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai; the failure of all of God's people over the age of 20 to enter the promised land and heaven, and the 40 more years of wandering of Moses, Joshua, and the next generation of God's people over 20 years of age. {Lest you find it difficult to believe that God went to all the trouble to bring the whole nation of Israel, with some Egyptians, out of bondage with many miracles and signs against Pharaoh and Egypt, then after many times of failed testing of these as the people of God, reject them as His own people--"many are called but few are chosen"--then you should read the summary of this whole historical happening in the book of Hebrews, especially the summary of this Rebellion in the Wilderness of Hebrews 3:7-11 where God "swore in My wrath", and after 40 years of failed testing in the wilderness that, "they shall not enter My rest, given as an example for us in Hebrews of: (1) how not to harden the heart into rebellion when God brings the inevitable tests of life; (2) how patient God is to test and wait for faith over 40 years; and (3) In the anger of God and after so long a period of testing and lack of faith, there is the inevitable judgment of God on lack of faith; and (4) These first people of God, like many other people of God in this time, according to Hebrews and other NT books, God decides (a) they always go astray in their heart and (b) they have never really learned the Ways of God.}

a. Sampey {HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT} on "The Law of Moses".

"Law of Moses" is what Sampey calls this period of OT history, chapter 5, after respectively chapters on "The Beginnings", "The Patriarchal Period", Job, and the "Era of Moses and Joshua". Of course, our first Top Topic, "The Living God of the Living" introduced Genesis and the first part of Exodus up to the point where this Living God, "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" as God first introduced Himself to Moses and man at the burning bush, and this second top

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topic of "The Righteousness of God and Man" continue with the Pentateuch of the first five books of the Bible--Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, often referred to in the NT by Jesus and the Apostles as "the law of Moses" or "the law given by Moses" (John 1:17; John 7:19; John 5:45-47; and Luke 24:27), much of the very summary of the whole Bible of Old and New Testament, of salvation, and of God's dealings with man throughout history in order to achieve and promote righteousness in John 1:17.

"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." (John 1:17)

Even as it will help you as you read and study the 14 NT books from the Apostle Paul, and the 3 which he sponsored through John Mark and Dr. Luke to realize that previously as a lawyer of the nation of Israel Paul was practiced in the national and religious laws of Israel, one and the same; so also you develop more understanding of the Bible as you comprehend that God all at one time and through Moses gave the laws of the Ten Commandments and the other rules and regulations of Exodus and Leviticus as both moral and the legal and religious laws of the new nation of Israel. And like Sampey writes on page 77 of HEART these "ten words" spoken by Jehovah from Mount Sinai, engraved on tablets of stone and later placed in the Ark of the Covenant, are the very foundation of the laws of Israel.

We will find out much more about them as both: (1) an expression of the very heart of the thoughts and character of God; and (2) a summary of the expression of the righteousness of God, what He expects and what man can achieve through faith. Please understand: the just or justified of the OT by faith were able to achieve the righteousness of the law of the 10 commandments, legally through their faith in God and to only a certain extent actually in lives of faith and from God. {**You may want to read more about these and other teachings from Jesus about the total law and 10 commandments from the books by Charles Allen, former pastor of the First Methodist Church in Houston, and in his books like "God's Psychiatry" and "God's Pattern of Thinking".**}

Like Sampey in the same chapter points out, Jesus in general and in particular in the famous Sermon on the Mount of Matthew 5-7 took these 10 commandments "as a text" for His own teachings, taking them all the way into **{as Allen also so well re-enforces}** thought and feeling, requiring all disciples to see at the heart the original meanings against anger, lust, and foolish swearing. The

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truth was near all along, as a few in Israel of old knew and understood, but it took Jesus and the Apostles to forcefully bring it out. And something you must know about the 10 Commandments and the revelations of God from the Bible is that "love" as the fulfillment of the Law was there along, and from the beginning in the giving of the Law, not something Jesus added to the 10 commandments as a matter of theological evolution when He came on earth. Granted He added more understanding of the original, but God intended that the 10 commandments all along be the fulfillment of love, and God clearly stated it as such in part of what He had Moses write down. {Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and Leviticus 19:18}. Many still do not get it that when Jesus answered the question of a scribe about the first and great commandment of the law as recorded in Mark 12:28-34 {by the way also at the very core of this Bible lesson Top Topic of Righteousness} Jesus quoted on (1) love for God out of Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and (2) on love for fellow man out of Leviticus 19:18. This were not new and even different worded summaries of the 10 commandments and the rest of the law.

"And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength". (Deuteronomy 6:4,5 and Mark 12:30)

"And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Leviticus 19:18)

So many simpleton and superficial Bible teachers today would have you believe that such a summary was never in the Old Testament, only the straightforward statements of the law of the 10 commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 where Moses reviews for Israel these and the other aspects of the covenant with God. {Most of Deuteronomy is a review and rehash of the history of Israel in the wilderness, the covenant and commands of God, with the promises of blessings or curses on Israel for the future, near the end of the life of Moses and just before Joshua took over to lead them into the Promised Land of Canaan. However this is more a subject for Top Topic #3, "The Composite Witness of the Bible" to come in the next installment which takes a whole separate topic to cover the many quotes in the NT from the book of Deuteronomy.}

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-1: Love of God and neighbor were in the 10 commandments of the law from the very beginning, stated but not fully understood by all, even as today; and when Jesus taught in the Sermon on

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the Mount and other places that He came to fulfill the law not destroy, it was to fulfill the love of God and fellow man and of righteousness.

b. Hester {also HEART OF THE OLD TESTAMENT} on

1. The original statement by God of the 10 commandments is given in Exodus 20, and quoted from quite often by Jesus and the Apostles in Luke 18:20, Mark 7:10, Matthew 5:38, Romans 13:8,9, and James 2:11. {You know there certainly are a lot usages of the 10 commandments, and quotes of in the NT, by the Apostles and Jesus for there to be so much ignorance of the deeper meaning of the commandments which were there all along in the original giving. For example, when in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that He "came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law", He meant that literally as Jesus came to make full and fulfill the full intention and statements of God about the law which were there all along: (1) on love; (2) on the character of God as an expectation for the character of man; and (2) as the fulfillment of grace, truth, and righteousness.}

2. Granted, as also explained in Hebrews, Romans, and Galatians, the temple, temple worship, the rules and regulations of burnt offerings as well as much of the formality of the law as given in Leviticus was done away with at the Crucifixion of Christ. God through Christ and the Crucifixion "nailed the rules and regulations to the cross". (Colossians 2:14)

Key to Bible understanding #2-2: Certainly while much of the law like the 10 commandments did not change from the OT to the teachings of Jesus and the NT, many of the rules and regulations, temple worship and sacrifices, were nailed to the cross as the temple at the Crucifixion of Christ was rent from top to bottom. By the way also the old covenant and the priesthood was replace by the Priesthood of Christ as the old covenant was obsoleted by God Himself.

3. However the old covenant with God was superseded with the New Covenant along with a means of man achieving actual as well as legal righteousness through the new birth of the Holy Spirit. {Hebrews 8:7-13}. God through Christ and the Crucifixion for salvation made the old covenant "obsolete" according to the Word of God. {By the way in Isaiah and Ezekiel, especially at the same time God began through His Word to make it clearer that Christ was the way of salvation and righteousness, giving some future hope to a disheartened and distraught people of God, Israel, He also began to

make clear that the shortcoming of the law and covenant would be overcome, fulfilled if you would, by the addition of a law written in the heart and mind, a new birth from the Holy Spirit.}

Key to Bible Understanding #2-3: Except for a few example lives like Moses, David, Abraham, for the most part the history of God's people of Israel is a dark and discouraging story of dismal failure, ups and downs with the breaking of the old covenant between God and man; but starting about midway through the Bible with Psalms, Isaiah, and other of the Prophets, God reveals more fully two great rays of hope for the future: (1) Christ as the Messiah Who will die on the cross for the sins of the world, Jews and Gentiles; and (2) a new way of righteousness legally, through faith in the cross, and actually through the new heart and new mind from the Holy Spirit. {By the way another great ray of hope is of with a new people of Jews and Gentiles, also a New Jerusalem with a new earth and a new heaven, and yes that is also at the end of Isaiah, chapter 66.}

4. The quote of Exodus 21:17 by Jesus as recorded in Mark 7:10, where the law of Moses, of course not in the 10 commandments, specified that anyone cursing mother or father would be put to death, illustrates one aspect of the law of Israel that did not remain as a rule or regulation after the Crucifixion of Christ.

(1). After the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20 came (a) the Law of the Altar of earth and for burnt offerings, (b) in Exodus 21 first the Law concerning servants, (c) then concerning violence and (d) animal control laws, and so on and on detailed laws for the country to promote justice; in the middle of the laws on violence--first the striking of a man so that he dies {**however for the murderer that did not lie in wait, God provided a city of refuge where he could flee, 21:13**}, second the punishment of death for premeditated murder, third the punishment of death for those who strike mother or father, fourth death for a man who kidnaps a man and sells him; then in 21:17 the verse quoted in Mark 7:10 by Jesus where "he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death."

(2). Since this non-ten commandment aspect of the law and regulations did not survive past the Crucifixion of Christ into Christianity, as like in America and other countries similar laws were not like in Israel also the law of the land, we do not worry about it; of course, we realize without the penalty of law how serious this disrespect of parents is to God. Yes, as part of the Ten Commandments which remained part of Christianity was the commandment to "honor father and

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mother". (Exodus 20:12) in order, the full commandment states, "that your days may be long upon the earth."

(3). What Jesus was dealing with as He used the quote of Exodus 21:17 in Mark 7:10 was how the religious leaders of His own day and time to: make the Word of God, like in the original commandment, of no effect by the traditions of man (Mark 7:13), for through the years since the original giving of the Law of Moses, the dominant interpretation of this law was any grown man could say to his parents "Corban", that is what profit you might have received from me is given to God as a gift, thus "then", in the words of Jesus, "you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother" (Mark 7:12); and even these statements by Jesus let's us know that the kind of cursing of mother and father was one such that allowed the children to escape any responsibility for care of mother and father.

(4). The whole teaching passage on this law and the incident with Phraisees and scribes started when they saw some of the disciples eating bread with unwashed {defiled hands, in their opinion}. Notice that there is not a quoting of any law or regulation at this point, but the explanation of John Mark in Mark 7:3 that the tradition of the elders and therefore of the Pharisees was that before any meal the Pharisees would wash their hands in a special way. These Pharisees questioned Jesus not about the Law of Moses, but about the "tradition of the elders" about bread and unwashed hands. (Mark 7:5) Jesus did quote from Isaiah, Isaiah 7:7, in response to the question from the Pharisees how: (1) the people of God honor God with their lips while the heart is far away from God; (2) they worship God vainly or to no profit; and (3) they teach for doctrines the commandments of men.

Key to Bible Understanding #2-4: Among the most religious of God's people and leaders religious customs and traditions had and do come to replace the commandments and teachings of God, sometimes by interpretations not of the ASPI type and sometimes just by custom and tradition; today and then among the religious of God's people there can be a lot of false and vain worship of lip service that is considered vanity in the sight of God and Christ.

(5). Jesus immediately taught the multitude of how it is the things that come out of a man or women that defile him not the things that come into a man from the outside (Mark 7:15); and later to His disciples, who puzzled on this parable, He explained that **"out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts,**

adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness {and surely in these you see the 10 commandments}, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." (Mark 7:21,22)

5. The quote of Exodus 21:24, about an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", in Matthew 5:38 is also a quote of the OT from Jesus, of course part of the Sermon on the Mount and a continuation of proper interpretations of the 10 commandments and law for Christians, after discussion of fulfillment of the law, of murder which really starts in the heart with hate, of adultery in the heart, of marriage as sacred and binding, of forbidding of all oaths, and then here as the "second mile" of Christianity. Jesus says do not resist evil with evil, to turn the other cheek, to go the extra mile with the demander, and to give to the person who asks or who would borrow from you. (Matthew 5:39-42) Once again the laws, rules, and regulations of the law beyond the Ten Commandments ceased with the cross to be part of the covenant between God and man. And once again such actions as the second mile, a fulfillment of the love of the law in the 10 commandments fulfills the love and righteousness of God. Yes, the eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth were part of the Law of Moses, and from God for the national laws of the nation of Israel as part of the old covenant; yet not part of the new covenant, Jesus explained that love was part, always in the 10 commandments, as fulfilled in the extra mile and other cheek.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-5: Acts of love, love being the fulfillment of the law and righteousness of God, like the extra mile, the other cheek, and giving, are to replace the Law of Moses and of the original nation of Israel where the only sense of justice is "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth and a life for a life". Once again the proper interpretation of the 10 commandments as love for God and love for neighbor, like original written and intended, takes the place of detailed regulations on eye for eye, since the commandments were not properly carried out and interpreted in the first place. If in doubt, go by what Jesus taught, knowing that it came from God where Jesus lived before His short life on earth. Justice and righteousness, of God and of Christ and for Christians, goes far beyond in challenge and in rightness that the simple justice of the law that requires one for one, eye for eye and tooth for a tooth or life for a life.

6. Idolatry was wrong not because of the command "to have no other gods before Me" or "thou shalt worship the Lord your God and only Him shall you serve", but because it is the natural requirement of a Creature for His Creator as well a reflection of what God is like, alias the character of God; and when I

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Corinthians 10:7 with a quote from Exodus 32:6 describes the play of the people while Moses was on Mount Sinai receiving the very commandment against idolatry, in context of Exodus 32 you will see that the creation of the golden calf to worship and around which to play was idolatry.

Key to Bible Understanding 2-6: as Paul explains, the ASPI, the golden calf incident of Exodus 32 we have many understandings of idolatry as committed by the first of God's people and also as by God's people today--(1) Although all of God's people in the wilderness were rescued by way of the sea by God, also lead by the cloud in the wilderness, and ate the same manna from heaven and spiritual food, and drank of the water from God including the spiritual water of Christ, "with most of them God was not pleased" (I Corinthians 10:5) {that is, God's people who do not please God}; (2) God scattered most of their bodies in the wilderness; (3) in the Bible God gives us these bad examples of His own people as examples not to follow (I Cor 10:6); (4) that we like them "should not lust after evil things" like they lusted, for example when they complained about the manna, quail, and water and coveted those delicacies like watermelon which they had in Egypt; and (5) when they played after eating and drinking the Bible as the Word of God, I Corinthians 10:7, as "idolaters"; (6) some of God's people in the wilderness committed "sexual immorality" and 23,000 of God's own were slain in one day in the wilderness; (7) some tempted Christ, being destroyed by serpents; (8) some of them complained and were destroyed. All of these examples of the Falling Away in the wilderness, and of course the violations of all the righteousness of God and of the commandments, and the consequences thereof with judgment from God are written in the Word "for our admonition"; and for the caution that whoever things that He stands as a chosen of God could still fall and fell.

2-2: The Laws of a Holy and Righteous God. (Leviticus 4-18)

NOTE: As we have already observed in this study is that the Laws of Moses went beyond the 10 commandments to regulations, civil law which would be the law of the new nation of Israel, and even how to organize. There is no indication that God ever intended for other nations to have the same strict and very holy civil law of Israel, yet on the other hand all the listing of rules and regulations eliminated through Christ and the cross indicate an wiping out of most of them. Yet at heart, we must realize that even as God wanted and demanded a "holy people" like Himself, it never happened not only because of the continued and up and down disobedience toward the old covenant between God and man, but because of the weak-

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nesses of the law (1) without a Christ and the cross, and (2) without the new birth from the Holy Spirit.

1. Copies of the true, or simulations if you would, should not be confused the true. (Hebrews 9:22-24 and Leviticus 4:18-20) We could concentrate on the copies of the laws and regulations and organizations, but since they are now gone and obsolete, it would be far better to concentrate on the TRUES of Hebrews 9 and the rest of Hebrews.

(1). These laws and regulations such as blood sacrifices were copies of higher things in heaven. (9:23)

(2). The holy of holy of the temple, made with human hands, was a copy of the TRUE heaven itself, which Christ did in the atonement of the Crucifixion as He appeared in the very presence of God in heaven for us (9:24).

(3). Even as a copy was also the high priest as he entered once every year with other blood, the true was the Crucified Christ who entered once for all with the sacrifice of Himself, putting away "by the sacrifice of Himself" {redemption} has put away sin once for all (9:26).

2. The requirements for holiness, fulfillment of the law and of righteousness, has remained a constant of the law in Leviticus 11:44 and I Peter 1:16, Word of God from the Apostle Peter. The Apostle Peter concludes admonitions from God the Holy Spirit, and as he was taught by Christ, with this quote in I Peter 1:16 of Leviticus 11:44--by the way more of the law fulfilled in Christ and not destroyed like some of the rules and regulations--"Be holy, for I am holy". This is the bottom line conclusion and what is being written, preceded and followed by implications for Christian behavior: (1) gird up the loins of your mind, another way to say focus on the long range hope of the Second Coming and the new earth; (2) Be sober; (3) rest in your hope of the grace to come in the Second Coming; (4) Be obedient children of God that do not conform to former lusts that possessed you before conversion and while you were still ignorant; (5) The God and Christ who called you are "holy", so also all your conduct is to be holy; (6) call on God the Father who judges all behavior without partiality; and (7) be reminded that you were redeemed not with silver and gold but with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-7: Christians and church members are to seek to be holy and righteous based on the character of God the Maker,

that He is holy. God expects of us, made in the image of God, what He Himself is; and what He originally intended for us to be as made in the image of God.

3. Do not be among those who say the Ten Commandments is all the religion I need, or do not strive to live by the law and laws of God and Moses as, according to Leviticus 18:5, and 16 and as quoted in Galatians 3:12, anyone who desires to live under the law must find life by keeping all the law.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-8 in the context of Galatians 3's interpretation of the law and of Leviticus 18:5: (1) absolutely no one is justified by the law in the sight of God (Galatians 3:11); (2) the just, or justified, must live not by law but by faith (3:11 and Habakkuk 2:4); the law is not faith and faith is not the law (3:12 and Leviticus 18:5); (3) Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, death and etc, having in the cross become a curse in our place (3:13).

2-3: More from the Bible on the Righteousness of God and Man.

While this second Top Topic of the Bible is based on and centered around the three books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, like with some of the other books of the Bible where quotes overlap and reinforce each other, and in the name of good Bible exegesis and hermeneutics {the science of biblical interpretation with books by Bernard Ramm on THE SCIENCE OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION}, where we keep our understanding of the Bible in the total context of the Bible, we must expand to other Scriptures on Righteousness as we did at the beginning of this chapter.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-9: Whether you are reading from Leviticus, Proverbs, Psalms, or Matthew, the best explanation of what you find in one book, chapter, and verse is what you find in the rest of the Bible. This is the principle of Bible hermeneutics called keep Bible in the total context, the corollary of which is "Read your Bible, it will throw a lot of light on the commentaries"; or we can say what is in one part of the Bible, since the origin in all cases is the same as from God, will shed light on what is in other parts of the Bible, and vice versa.

1. The Righteousness of God and Man.

(1). Psalm 111 provides us a good introductory description to the Righteousness of God.

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As we quickly skim through Psalm chapter 111, you will notice the connection between works and righteousness. In fact the phrases are almost interchangeable between "the works of God" which are great in 111:1 and "His righteousness which endures forever" in 111:3. Several things are emphasized about the works of God in this Psalm: (a) The works are great; (b) God's work is honorable (v3); (c) His work is glorious (v3); (d) It is wonderful how "God has made" (v4) His wonderful works to be remembered, and we immediately think of three ways, in the Word of God and in the works of Creation and Salvation; (e) the works of His hands are verity, obvious a derivative of truth; (f) God's works are justice.

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-10: Whether you study the works of man or God, of the righteousness of God or man from the Bible, you will find that works and righteousness are closely connected so that in most cases you are talking about the works of righteousness, man of God.

Manifestations of the works or righteousness of God are given throughout the Psalm: (a) His works manifest themselves in greatness whether you talk about the works of Creation, of salvation, or of the creation and preservation of the Bible; (b) His righteousness and works endure forever, that is they are everlasting, and we must modify the works of Creation in the sense that while the old earth and old heavens will be shaken apart and consumed with fire to make room for the new earth, an earth and heaven the creations of God do remain {and if you read carefully Revelation 21 on the new heaven and new earth, where first there is no more sea, then you start to realize the possibility except for the New Jerusalem that is lowered to the existing Mount Zion that the new earth will possibly exist where the water of the seas and oceans were melted by the fervent heat}; (c) God's works of righteousness include "graciousness" and "compassion" (v4), in fact they "are full of graciousness and compassion" {by the way all the holiness and righteousness of God is to be emulated by Christians as they were emulated to the very tee by our author and finisher of the Christian faith, the Lord Jesus Christ}; (d) God's works of righteousness are seen in that He gives food to the people who respect Him (v5); (e) We see the works of the righteousness of God in that He always has in mind the covenant and covenants that He makes with His own people (v5); (f) God works righteousness as He declares, primarily through Jesus, the Prophets, and the Bible--alias the Bible--the power that is in those works like salvation, Creation, and creation and preservation of the Bible, specifically however according to verse 6, this power is declared as God's people receive the heritage of the nations, something that will fully happen on the New earth after the Second Coming of Christ; (g) God's works of righteousness are seen in the realization that "all His precepts are sure"(v7), stable

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and to be relied on more than gravity, inertia, and gravitational attraction; (h) God's works of righteousness are "done in truth and uprightness" (v8); (h) We dare not neglect redemption, another word for salvation with a particular emphasis on in salvation how God bought us back from sin and servitude to sin even though at Creation we had originally belonged to Him (v9); (i) God is righteous and God works because He has "commanded His {everlasting} covenant forever"--it like God is immutable (v9); and (j) the works of righteousness of God include that all about His character and Name, that He is holy and awesome. {In the previous introduction to holy and holiness from Leviticus, some effort was made to distinguish between holiness and righteousness, but I think that we see that whether we are talking about the holiness and righteousness of God or man, righteousness has the emphasis on the works--more like personality--while holiness has the emphasis on character. The difference is what we do are what we are. And it is hoped that some distinction between actual righteousness and sanctification has been gleaned, recalling that "saints" as a common word in the Bible for Christians is derived from sanctification, and that sanctification is the actual process started with the regeneration of the new birth and finalized when we see Christ as He is. In short, sanctification is becoming holy.}

Key to Bible Understanding #2-11: Sanctification like character is becoming holy while righteousness--actual, not legal and real--like personality and started with the regeneration of the new birth is the works of righteousness. Years ago my habit was to divide righteousness into LEGAL and REAL; but since when God declares us righteous because of faith in Christ that is as real as an righteousness can be even though more a legal righteousness as described in the atonement, so that the two categories of righteousness for man should be (1) Legal and Real, and (2) Actual {for our continuing Bible study on righteousness, you will find that "actual" is a Bible word and from Romans.

NOTE: The first covenant which God made with Abraham was the "everlasting" covenant, when God Himself preached the Gospel to Abraham and Abraham believed; the second covenant was the Old Covenant of the Old Testament given by God through Moses and between God's original people of Israel; and the new covenant of the New Testament was actually the fulfillment of the Everlasting Covenant, one sealed with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in atonement and crucifixion.

Key to Understanding Bible # 2-12: The Everlasting Covenant with God made with Abraham, that is "God preached the Gospel to Abraham" and Abraham believed, a righteousness by faith was the first covenant of God with man, and which by the way according to Romans included us as Gentiles since Abraham is our father by faith; the second covenant was the old covenant between God and Israel given through Moses, often violated and broken by God's own people, and was inadequate in that it did not include the reality of the new birth {this became known about Jeremiah and Ezekiel}; and the new covenant of the New Testament based on the atonement and blood of Christ replaced the old covenant; however in reality it was a fulfillment of the everlasting covenant.

(2). We comprehend something of the righteousness of man in Proverbs 12. What we read in Proverbs 12 are some selected thoughts from God on the "righteousness of man". If you were teaching and preaching on this chapter of the Word of God, you might want to entitled it "The Righteousness of Men".

(a) First Proverbs 12:3 established a contrast between righteousness and wickedness, allowing us to quickly see that they are opposites, then presents the first characteristic of a righteous man as "a root that can not be moved" {the wicked can not be established in the sight of God} (v3); (b) The righteous man has "right thoughts", of course consistent with "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he" and the statements from Jesus about it is the things that come out of the heart that defile a man, the opposite also being true (v5); (c) The righteous man has a "house that will stand" while the wicked are overthrown and disappear, of course this speak of end judgment and for eternity (v7); (d) A righteous man is humane and regards the life of animals (v10); (e) the root, and surely we read character here, "of the righteous yields fruit" (v12); (e) the righteous have the characteristics, or resulting personalities, to "come through trouble" as compared to the wicked that gets trapped in the transgressions of his own lips, again of judgment and eternal judgment (v13); (f) since the righteous man declares truth then it is a work or declaration of righteousness (v17); (g) when you look at the long range and end results of the life of the righteous, you will find that "no grave trouble will overtake" them (v21); (h) the righteous are to chose his friends careful (v26); and (i) "In the way of righteousness is life", where the path does not include death.

NOTE: It behooves us to learn, achieve, and seek the WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, which we will continue to do! Does this not remind you of Jesus' statement in the Sermon on the Mount, and a conclusion of several

other statements in the Sermon of Matthew 5 and 6, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...."

2. "Righteousness" in the Sermon on the Mount. No doubt you have read, studied, even taught and preached the Sermon on the Mount, or Matthew 5-7 quite often; but have you realized how prominent the word "righteousness" is while still be hidden in all the other teachings of Jesus that have gained lasting impressions.

(1). Jesus with a message and more teachings from God in heaven, where He previously lived, gives a promise of blessing or happiness to those who will hunger and seek after the RIGHTEOUSNESS of God (Matthew 5:6), the blessing being when God and Christ witness this dedicated effort of hungering and thirsting after righteousness of a promise that "they will be filled"! Later in the Sermon you will find promises that with the proper priority in life of God and righteousness over bread and things, that the bread and things as necessary {not the Gospel of Prosperity} will be added; but here the spiritual bread takes the place of the physical bread and necessities as the guarantee from God and Christ comes that there will be filling. There will be no hunger in the life of any child of God for righteousness when that righteousness is eagerly and seriously sought!

(2). Now with righteous manifestations of good works, there is no immunity from the persecutions of the world. Like Jesus said later, "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you." However again while the promise and guarantee is not from persecution, the guarantee is that the persecuted will inherit the kingdom of heaven. In fact, you would have to say that the kingdom of heaven is especially designed for the persecuted. Of course from the book of Revelation we learn that there are two resurrections: (a) the first immediately after death as with spiritual bodies they go to heaven to be with God and Christ; and (b) the second resurrection where the spirits of just men made perfect finally at the Second Coming of Christ receive their resurrected bodies. (Matthew 5:10)

(3). Christ sets very high standards for the righteousness of man in Matthew 5:20 as he tells the children of God that "their righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees." Oh yes, these men were the religious leaders of the day, some of the most religious that have ever lived in prayer, worship, and works; but it was and is not enough according to Christ. Later as we come to Romans, the book on Righteousness of Man and God, we will

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see that they "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, had not submitted to the righteousness of God" which is by faith.

(4). "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33) The priority of life must be for God and righteousness.

3. Previously we saw in Psalm 111 how the righteousness of God relates, almost synonymously, with the works of God: now we see how in Galatians 5 that the works of man relates to the righteousness of men, of course this is not LEGAL and REAL righteousness but actual.

(1). We have previously looked at Leviticus 19:18 which is quoted by other books of the NT besides in Galatians 5:14, and we will look at it again, including an expanded look at the book of Leviticus with its message of separation from the other peoples in the lands of Egypt and Canaan {separation from other Gentiles and normal Gentile behavior has always been a goal and demand of God for His own people}.

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Galatians 5:14 and Leviticus 19:18)

NOTE: Later we will see where the Apostle James in James 2:8 quotes this same verse from Leviticus and calls it "the royal law". Don't take it too lightly because Pastor James is getting at the practice of discrimination based on clothing, status, and money, a common and accepted practice of unrighteousness and sin and wickedness today. {Yes, while it is true that the American Democratic Faith prohibits discrimination based on race, religion, and creed, the Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ prohibits respect of any persons, calling it a sin as serious as murder or adultery.}

A little perspective of the context of Leviticus 18 and 19 is in order here! I would chose to summarize the title of Leviticus 18, "Do not According to the Doings of Egypt and Canaan" while some Bibles like to call it "laws on sexual morality", and that is there also. Several key points of some of the verses helpful for our continued study of righteousness and love are: (1) God spoke to Moses, and Moses spoke to the children of Israel that "I am the LORD your God" {right, sounds like the beginning of the 10 commandments first of Exodus 20 and then the review for the new generation in Deuteronomy 6; and indeed you will

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find a lot of similarity between the 10 commandments and the subject matter of Leviticus 19 which, in fact, I like to entitle "Commentary on the Ten Commandments"; (2) God admonished them through Moses (v18:3) not to do according to the doings of the land where they dwelt in Egypt or in the land of Canaan where they were going {stated in another way God told them "not to walk in their ordinances"}; (3) From verse 4 and the context of Leviticus we realize that coming from God were four categories of requirements for righteousness--commandments like in the ten commandments, conditions of the old covenant between God and Israel, "judgments", and "ordinances" {sometimes the word "statutes" is used in the place of ordinances, so that the last two categories of requirements of right or righteousness from God become statutes and ordinances}; (4) Previously under the Laws of a Holy God we looked at Leviticus 18:5,6 {and as quoted in Galatians 3:12}, "My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them", however we did not warn you of the Bible in Romans to come which essentially states that the law and laws came after the everlasting covenant was given to Abraham and the world, that the law of Moses and of God was given later to make sin obvious and promote guilt; (5) God's people of Israel are not to "defile" themselves with any of these things of immorality and lack of rightness mentioned, and as practiced by the other nations around them--God is casting them out before them (v24)--what is happening is that the land is "vomiting out" the inhabitants of the land; (6) The people of Israel are to keep the ordinances of God in order that they will not commit the "abominable customs" of the inhabitants, also in order that they will not defile themselves, the opposite of course, is to be "holy" like God of character and righteous in the works of personality (v30).

Key to Bible Understanding # 2-13: The argument of Romans 3 is to contrast a righteousness by law and a righteousness apart from the law which we will come to later in a closer look at Romans 3 on righteousness; however now is the time in the study to declare according to the Word of God that the law, alias ten commandments, even statutes, ordinances, and judgment {alias God's character and value system of holiness} in order: (1) that every mouth might be stopped as it claimed innocence from blame, Paul will call it our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ and righteousness by faith; and (2) that the whole world, Jews and Gentiles, might become guilty before God.

"Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Romans 3:19)

And as we see from the Galatians 3:12 quote of Leviticus 18:5,6, amplified and explained in the larger context of Romans and Galatians, a miniature of Romans, is that if indeed a man could keep all the laws, statutes, ordinances, and judgments of God to perfect, this would be a way to live eternally; however, it is not possible, and lest you doubt that look at the number of moral Americans and church members who discriminate against the poor and those of lack of status.

4. The Description of Righteousness by Faith of Romans 4.

{Hopefully you read the book of Romans as recommended in Top Topic #1, and it should be easy for you to read now only the fourth chapter of Romans.} Due to limitations of time and space, we can only hit some of the highlights of this chapter as relate to a description of Righteousness by Faith. {Recall that the problem with many religious people, even secular, of the world is that they attempt to establish their own righteousness in the sight of God, therefore never get around to a righteousness by faith.}

(1). The original promise of the everlasting covenant to Abraham, and his seed of faith which includes us, was before the law, being a "righteousness of faith" (Romans 4:13).

(2). It is "of faith" and "by grace". (Romans 4:16) Never have the little words of "of" and "by" meant so much.

(3). Righteousness is legally "accounted" to us as it was to Abraham when God sees faith. (Romans 4:22)

(4). Another way to say righteousness is accounted to us, in the words of Romans and the Bible is to say that "righteousness is imputed to us who believe" (Romans 4:23,24). While accounted makes it clear that the necessary legal book keeping in heaven has been done for us to be declared righteous, it seems in imputed to get to us here on earth. Either way, you know it is by faith and of grace, a gift of righteousness.

(5). In Romans 4:25 you have two great words of salvation, the atonement not stated but implied in the Christ "was delivered up for our offenses" and directly stated in the "justification".

5. The Gift of Righteousness of Romans 5.

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(1). Surely you see "the gift of righteousness" as a Bible phrase as in Romans 5:17.

(2). You also see some definition of the great word of salvation, "justification", in Romans 5:18 where there is by faith a "justification of life" and based on another great act and word of salvation, "atonement" without the use of the word itself, as the contrast is made between original sin of Adam and Eve where the condemnation of God passed on to all humanity because of this one man Adam, and then by the one God-man, Christ, and His one act in crucifixion the atonement passed upon all men, "even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."

(3). By the obedience of one God-man, Christ, "many will be made righteous" (5:20), the MADE RIGHTEOUS is once again a good phrase to describe the imputation or accounting of righteousness to man. It is legal but it is real as it comes from God and through Christ!

6. Some of the big words of salvation--such as justification, redemption, propitiation, as related to the righteousness of God and man in Romans 3.

(1). Two of the great words of the great salvation of God are in Romans 3:24, namely justification and redemption, as we read "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus".

(2). God through "propitiation" by the blood of Christ, and through faith GOD DEMONSTRATED HIS OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS: it was necessary according to Paul and the Bible for God to demonstrate that He was still the very nature of righteousness in spite of the fact that he had overlooked all those sins of all those people in past history, "because in HIS forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed". In one of the greatest of all statements of the Bible that describes God as "JUST AND THE JUSTIFIER", in Romans 3:26 God through JESUS' atonement and "through faith" demonstrates in the present His own righteousness.

(3). There is in Romans 3 a short description of the difference between RIGHTEOUSNESS BY LAW and RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH. {You will find that difference set out quite often in Romans, especially in Romans 10 where it says that the righteousness by faith does not try to reach up to heaven to be like God by works, etc.}

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a. Righteousness by Law prohibited by: whatever the law says to you or does not say to you, it does say that any and all who chose to be under the law and live under the law do not achieve any righteousness in the sight of God but rather [1] have their mouths of self-justification stopped, and [2] become guilty in the sight of God. (Romans 3:19,20) There is no justification in the sight of God by the "deeds {works} of the law. In fact, just the opposite "by the law is the knowledge of sin".

b. Righteousness of God apart from law (Romans 3:21-26): [1] this new righteousness of God apart from law is "now revealed" {obviously in the time of Christ where it was fully demonstrated and through Christ and the Apostles made clear}; [2] of course it was witnessed to as the way of salvation and the everlasting covenant by the Prophets in the OT and the Apostles and Jesus in the NT, by the "law and the Prophets"; [3] it is a righteousness of God through faith in Christ; [4] to all and for all who "believe", there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, only a difference between righteousness by law {which is impossible} and righteousness by faith; [4] Justified by the grace of God and through redemption {another great word of salvation which literally means that God bought us back, although we originally belonged to Him by Creation, from bondage to sin and Satan and death} in Christ--you have to watch the little words in the reading of Romans like the "in" which is "in Christ", the "through" in through the justification that is in Christ Jesus and the "being" and "freely" in "being justified freely by His grace"; and [5] God set forth Christ as a PROPITIATION {another great word of salvation} by His blood {the blood of Christ being another short descriptive word for the atonement}.

7. Characteristics of Righteousness and Unrighteousness as presented in Romans 1. **{Yes, as stated previously Romans has, as some commentators like Dr. Wolber of Ouachita Baptist has entitled his commentary, the Righteousness of God. However once again you must read Romans 1 as in no way can we do justice to the content now.}**

(1). In Romans 1:16,17 the "Gospel of Christ" is introduced as: (a) the power of God demonstrated all the way to salvation **{you have no doubt that Paul is about to make the greatest treatise of all on the salvation of God as based on the proper interpretation of the OT quotes on the subject, revealed and witnessed but never fully explained or understood until men could see Christ}**; (b) for everyone who believes, Jew and Gentile; (c) through it is the "revelation of the righteousness of God" **{yes righteousness and salvation is the subject of Romans}**; (d) the Gospel is a way of salvation from "faith to faith", as it starts

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in initial faith and continues in faith; and (e) with a quote from Habakkuk 2:4, "The just **{and justified}** shall live by faith", we are assured once again that the everlasting covenant by faith was there in the OT all along. It was really there so God could overlook the sins of the past, being both the just God and the justifier of all who believe .

(2). We can see much about what lived or "actual" righteousness is by what is not, it is not the opposite of "unrighteousness" of Romans 1:29-32. All of these are the very opposite of the nature of God and inspired in men by Satan and the "spirit within us that lusteth to envy" (James 4:5): (a) sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; and with the subsequent description of the character of men where there is unrighteousness: (a) whisperers, (b) backbiters, (c) haters of God, (d) violent, (e) proud, (f) boasters, (g) inventors of evil things, (h) disobedient to parents, (i) undiscerning, (j) untrustworthy, (k) unloving, (l) unforgiving, and (m) unmerciful.