



Righteousness

God's Absolute Righteousness (+R)

God's righteousness is absolute moral perfection and absence of all sin or contact with anything less than perfect righteousness equal to His own. Divine righteousness is the absolute standard by which God judges all of His created beings. Psalms 119:137, 2 Sam. 22:31, Psalms 145:17, Psalms 50:6, Rom. 10:3.

"Tsadhe. Righteous are You, O LORD, And upright are Your judgments." (Psalms 119:137, NASB)

"As for God, His way is blameless; The word of the LORD is tested; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him." (2 Samuel 22:31, NASB)

"The LORD is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds." (Psalms 145:17, NASB)

"And the heavens declare His righteousness, For God Himself is judge. Selah." (Psalms 50:6, NASB)

"For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God." (Romans 10:3, NASB)

God is infinitely holy and perfectly righteous in all of His ways. His righteousness is evident in all of His attributes. This is because God's righteousness prevents any compromise of His perfect justice. God's perfect justice prevents any compromise of His other attributes from any source. Deut. 32:4; 1 Sam. 2:2; Psalms 22:3; Psalms 47:8.

"The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He." (Deuteronomy 32:4, NASB)

"There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God." (1 Samuel 2:2, NASB)

"Yet You are holy, O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel." (Psalms 22:3, NASB)

"God reigns over the nations, God sits on His holy throne." (Psalms 47:8, NASB)

To be "righteous" means to be acting in accordance with all of God's laws and statutes and without sin or guilt. Because God is perfect in all of His attributes, God's righteousness is perfect, eternal, unchangeable, and absolute. See category on [God's Righteousness](#).

Man's Relative Righteousness (-R)

What is righteousness in everyday language? Yes, goodness like, "He is a good guy." Man's concept of righteousness (goodness) is one of relativity. Many say, "My sins are more refined than yours and therefore, I am more righteousness than you." People set up standards by which they judge the degree of righteousness in others. Most people feel they are basically good, but the best good that man can crank out is only human good with the source being the old sin nature.

There are three types of individuals – all with relative righteousness (-R). The moral man in Romans 2:1-16, the immoral man in Romans 1:18-32, and the religious man in Romans 2:17-29.

"But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God?" (Romans 2:3, NASB)

"But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the



day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who WILL RENDER TO EACH PERSON ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS:" (Romans 2:5-6, NASB)

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them." (Romans 1:18-19, NASB)

"For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 1:25, NASB)

"But if you bear the name "Jew" and rely upon the Law and boast in God, and know His will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth," (Romans 2:17-20, NASB)

"For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God." (Romans 2:28-29, NASB)

Many people are "good" based on the human standards of the society they live in. Let's use Joe as an example. Joe is a good guy. He has no criminal record, he's friendly, easy going, has a really nice family, gives to the poor, and can be found helping out during recovery efforts following natural disasters. Joe would be considered a good guy by almost anyone's standard. All the human good that Joe does is called relative righteousness (-R) when compared to God's perfect and absolute righteousness (+R). However, Joe is also a sinner as are all human beings and has a genetically-formed old sin nature as do all people. Therefore, because of Joe's sinful state and his relative righteousness, Joe cannot do anything to achieve a relationship with God. Ever. He is helpless to do so no matter how hard he tries.

God's viewpoint of man's relative righteousness (-R) is that man's greatest work can never produce any absolute righteousness (+R). Further, God's viewpoint of these greatest of human works is quite clear. Rom. 3:10-12; Isaiah 64:6. See category on [Man](#).

"as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE." (Romans 3:10-12, NASB)

"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away." (Isaiah 64:6, NASB)

The Barrier Between Man and God

God cannot have fellowship with that which is evil or sinful. Isaiah 59:2; Psalms 11:7; 1 John 1:5-10.

"But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear." (Isaiah 59:2, NASB)

"For the LORD is righteous, He loves righteousness; The upright will behold His face." (Psalms 11:7, NASB)

"This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there



is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.” (1 John 1:5-10, NASB)

God’s absolute standard of perfect righteousness (+R) is the criterion. God demands the same righteousness in His creatures that He has. Rom. 3:23. See category on [The Barrier Between Man and God](#).

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23, NASB)

The Meeting Place of God's Righteousness and Man

The absolute righteousness (+R) of God is available to all who believe by faith in Jesus Christ. God’s very own absolute righteousness (+R) is imputed to the believer at faith belief in the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. It is not achieved by self-effort, but is received from God by grace. Rom. 3:22; Rom. 4:5; Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8-9.

“even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;” (Romans 3:22, NASB)

“But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,” (Romans 4:5, NASB)

“He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,” (Titus 3:5, NASB)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9, NASB)

At the point of faith belief at salvation, man with relative righteousness (-R) receives the imputation from God the Father of God’s very own absolute righteousness (+R). Believers then have the very same absolute righteousness (+R) of God in Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 5:21; Isaiah 61:10; Psalms 24:5. See categories on [Justification](#) and [Imputation](#).

“He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB)

“I will rejoice greatly in the LORD, My soul will exult in my God; For He has clothed me with garments of salvation, He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.” (Isaiah 61:10, NASB)

“He shall receive a blessing from the LORD And righteousness from the God of his salvation.” (Psalms 24:5, NASB)

The perfect sinless humanity of Jesus Christ satisfied the righteousness of God by His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross for the sins of mankind. He is the only human being to perfectly fulfill the Mosaic Law. Rom. 10:4; Col. 2:14.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.” (Romans 10:4, NASB)

“having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us;



and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Colossians 2:14, NASB)

The Lord Jesus Christ was willing to give this perfect life and paid the penalty for man’s sins with His spiritual death. John 10:18; Rom. 6:23.

“No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.” (John 10:18, NASB)

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 6:23, NASB)