

Major Bible Themes

52 Vital Doctrines of the Scriptures Simplified and Explained

Adapted from the book *Major Bible Themes*
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Four Aspects of Righteousness

- Righteousness
 - Righteousness is defined as conformity to a standard – moral, legal, societal, divine, etc.
 - Righteousness can be related to either status (e.g. having a valid driver’s license) or actions (e.g. driving your car in accordance with the traffic laws).
 - The Scriptures distinguish four aspects of righteousness.
 - ✦ God is Righteous
 - ✦ The Self-Righteousness of Man
 - ✦ The Imputed Righteousness of God
 - ✦ Righteousness Imparted by the Spirit
- God is Righteousness
 - God is righteous in His very essence.
 - ✦ It is impossible for Him to deviate from His righteousness by so much as a “shadow of turning” (Jas 1:17).
 - ✦ Therefore, He cannot look upon sin with the slightest degree of allowance which necessitates the condemnation of sinful man.
 - God is righteous in His ways.
 - ✦ Everything God does is perfectly righteous.
 - ✦ No act of God can diminish His perfect righteousness – including God’s gracious act of forgiving sinful man.
 - ✦ Jesus Christ dying as our substitute made it possible for God to save sinful man without compromising His perfect righteousness.
- The Self-Righteousness of Man
 - People tend to evaluate their own righteousness in a relative way by comparing themselves with others, but the Scriptures declare that this is not wise (2 Cor 10:2).
 - God has declared that the deeds which fallen man considers to be “righteous” are nothing more than “filthy rags” (Isa 64:6).
 - Mankind has its own standards for the family, for society, for the state, etc., but none of these standards form the basis upon which man stands before God and will be judged by Him.
 - In Romans 3:9-23 Paul gives the most definitive declaration of the “righteousness” of mankind according to God’s standard.

- The Imputed Righteousness of God
 - God imputed Adam's original sin to the entire human race with the effect that all men are considered sinners by God (Rom 5:12-21).
 - The sin of man was imputed to Jesus Christ as the sin offering for the whole world (2 Cor 5:14; Heb 2:9; 1 John 2:2).
 - The righteousness of God is imputed to all who believe in Jesus Christ unto salvation (2 Cor 5:21).
 - This is accomplished by on the basis of the fact that we are placed "in Christ" through the baptism of the Spirit (Rom 6:3).
 - Because of this vital union with Christ, when God looks at a believer He reckons him to be what His own Son is – the righteousness of God – and we stand before God in the perfection of Christ as a result.
 - Imputed righteousness affect our standing before God (Rom 3:21-22), but the righteousness of our state depends upon the way we live out our daily lives.
 - Imputed righteousness is the grounds for our justification (Rom 3:28; 5:1) since we could not be declared innocent by a righteous God on the basis of our own self-righteousness.
- Righteousness Imparted by the Spirit
 - When filled with the Spirit, the child of God will produce the righteous works of the "fruit of the Spirit" (Gal 5:22-23).
 - Such a believer will also utilize the gifts for service which are given by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:7; 1 Pet 4:10).
 - This manner of life is not produced by the believer, but rather through the believer by the Holy Spirit.
 - To those who "walk by the Spirit" rather than the flesh (Gal 5:16-17) the righteousness of the Law, which in this case means no less than the realization of the whole will of God for the believer, is fulfilled in them (Rom 8:4).

- Questions
 - How are God and man distinguished as to righteousness?

 - What are the four aspects of righteousness revealed in Scripture?

 - In what different ways is God completely righteous?

 - To what extent is man self-righteous, and why is this insufficient?

 - Why is the imputed righteousness of God necessary?

 - What are the results of the imputation of righteousness to man?

 - How does imputation affect our standing vs. state before God?

 - How does imputed righteousness relate to justification?

 - Contrast justification and forgiveness.

 - What is the difference between justification by works and justification by faith?

 - To what extent is righteousness imparted by the Spirit?