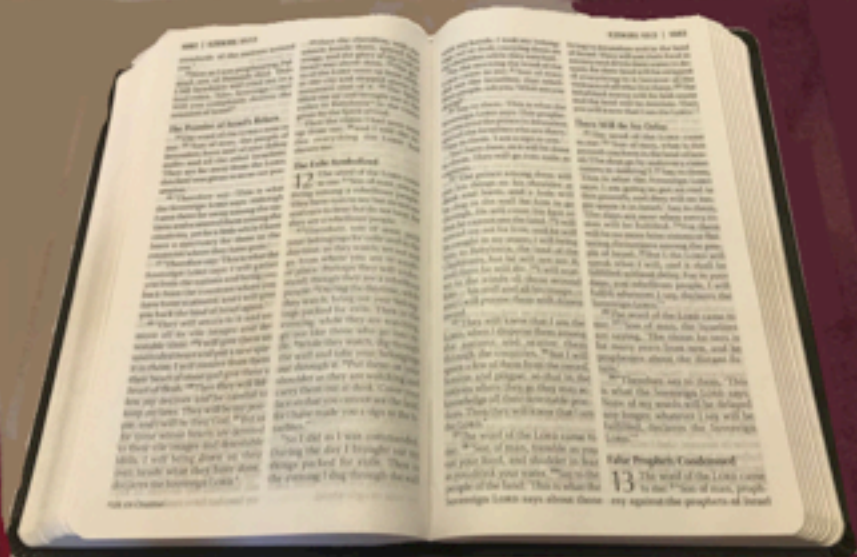


Devotional Thoughts From God's Word

Essays in Righteousness

*Your word I have treasured in my heart,
That I may not sin against You.- Ps 119::11*



John H. King

ESSAYS IN
RIGHTEOUSNESS

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To All Those Who Hunger & Thirst After God's Righteousness

The following list of English translations might help to identify the limited use of them in this work. [<https://solarmythology.com/translations/bibles.htm>]

- AMP Amplified Bible 2015
- AMPC Amplified Bible Classic Edition 1965
- ASV American Standard Version 1901
- BBE Bible in Basic English 1965
- CEV Contemporary English Version 1995 (NT - 1991)
- CSB Christian Standard Bible 2016
- CWB Clear Word Bible 1992
- ERV Easy to Read 2015
- ESV English Standard Version 2003
- ICB NCV International Children's Bible, New Century Version 1986 (NT - 1978)
- JPB J.B. Phillips New Testament in Modern English 1958 (Revised 1972)
- KJ21 Twenty-First Century King James Version 1994 (NT - 1992)
- KJV AV King James Version (also known as Authorized Version) 1611
- MLB NBV Modern Language Bible also known as New Berkley Version 1959 (NT - 1945; NT revised 1969)
- NASB New American Standard Bible (NASB) 1971 (NT - 1963; Revised 1996)
- NET New English Translation 2005
- NIrV New International Reader's Version (NIrV) 1996
- NIV New International Version 1978 (NT - 1973)
- NKJV New King James Version 1982
- NLT New Living Translation 1996
- NRSV New Revised Standard Version 1990
- TEV Good News Bible also known as Today's English Version 1974 (NT - 1966; Revised 1993)
- YLT Young's Literal Translation 1862 (Revised 1887, 1898)
- WIL Williams New Testament in the Language of the People 1937; Reprinted 2000 as Millennium edition.

The Greek Text used is the 28th Revised Edition of the Novum Testamentum Graece based on the work of Eberhard and Erwin Nestle. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2013.

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Introduction

What is *The Righteousness of God*? One might think the answer obvious: this is God's gift of salvation whereby now we are in right standing with God. However, the meaning of the verb (in Protestant theology translated "to declare righteous") has many meanings. One thing is true: the word *righteousness* in our Bible has no meaning without God. "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." [Romans 3:10]. "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him." [1 John 2:29].

We define *righteousness* as a quality of Christian character which God gifts to those who hunger for it [Matthew 5:6] and, subsequently, as such, it brings believers into conformity to the Will of God [Matthew 6:33]. Yet, rarely in the Bible, the word "*righteousness*" is used in a more general sense for *all forms* of devotion to God, as, for example, the misguided righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes [Matthew 5:20; 2 Peter 2:21]. Pharisaic righteousness, which Jesus said was "less" than what was required to get into God's Kingdom [Matthew 5:20], was still a veiled reference to the righteousness of God. So, even here, "righteousness is righteousness." The word never loses its true sense and emphasis. All English translations of our New Testament always translate the Greek noun with our word "righteousness."

Jesus' dealing with Our Sin

But what is that sense and emphasis? In Isaiah 33:15-16 (in the Greek version) the prophet proclaims "He that walks righteously [in righteousness], and speaks uprightly ... he shall

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dwell on high.” Isaiah, no doubt, is describing a life lived in conformity with God’s will (which for the prophet was laid down in detail in the Mosaic law). In the language of the prophet in Hebrews *righteousness* is contrasted with *lawlessness*. “[To] have loved righteousness [is to have] hated lawlessness” [Hebrews 1:9]. It is, therefore, from the Old Testament and the association of righteousness with the Mosaic Law that the word speaks of “uprightness, moral purity”¹ in conformity with the Law. When used of God, it is His holiness.

The writer to the Hebrews didn’t contrast God with money, as Jesus warned, “you cannot serve God and mammon” [Matthew 6:24]. Had he done so, we could easily see how a giving heart and greediness are mutually exclusive ideas. Service to God as a gratuitous act of love instead of a means to a financial end is imaginable because examples of both possibilities abound in our experiences. Then we might say that if you’re not greedy but a giver at heart and in practice, you are righteous [Colossians 3:5]. But in Hebrews the contrast is between following the law or being a law-breaker—something far less relevant for a non-Israelite.

If the writer to the Hebrews had employed Paul’s explanation of the war between “the flesh” and “The Spirit of God” [Galatians 5:17] righteousness would be a good word for spiritual victory in this conflict. Even if we overthink “the flesh” we do have an idea because in a spiritual sense we know this war is being waged. Carnality, a selfish spirit of “me, all mine,” cannot serve a God whose entire “thing” is grace, giving undeserved and unearned gifts of His love.

Somehow, as cryptic as these 2 descriptions of “living upright” might sound, they are, in fact, simple and concrete because we relate. We testify to spiritual victories all the time [Ephesians 6:12].

1. Joseph Thayer. *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon*. Hendrickson Publishers. Peabody MA.: 14th printing, 2019) page. 149.

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Christian Conduct

Righteousness is living right. Righteousness in action is Christian conduct. Righteousness is being a law-abiding child of God—but what law? It is now: “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” [Romans 8:2]. We are not discarding moral decency (“serving with reverence,” Hebrews 12:28) or peaceful social interaction (“Follow peace with all men,” Hebrews 12:14) or honoring “man’s” laws (“subject unto the higher powers,” Romans 13:1). In the Old Testament *righteousness* meant following the Mosaic Law. The Savior, through His crucifixion, now by faith provides for the law to be written on the believer’s heart. “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” [Jeremiah 31:33]. Paul agreed: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” [Romans 8:4].

Justice

The translators cover over any ambiguity connected with the word “lawlessness”² in Hebrews 1:9 and interpret this word to mean, simply, *iniquity*, *evil*, or *wickedness*. But the writer of Hebrews is saying that Jesus because He was righteous followed the *law*. So we are brought to conclude that the word *righteousness* has a *legal* aspect to it.

Legally, righteousness is justice. So the righteousness of God is His justice: “He will judge the world in righteousness” [Acts 17:31; Revelation 19:11]. Jesus, like the Old Testament saints on God’s honor roll of Faith, “ruled with *justice* [righteousness]” [Hebrews 11:33].

There are 2 forms of justice: punishment and chastisement. Righteousness, therefore, represents a “retributive,

2. Hebrews, having been written to Jewish converts to Christianity, employs terms with more an Old Testament “flavor.”

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as well as, restorative justice.”³ This truth is foundational that Christ’s crucifixion is *both* a propitiation and an expiation for sin. “For he hath made him to be sin⁴ for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” [2 Corinthians 5:21]. It is in this sense Jesus affirmed, “I am not come to destroy [the law], but to fulfill [it].” [Matthew 5:17]. Isaiah declared, “Because he is righteous, the LORD has exalted his glorious law” [Isaiah 42:21].

To Be Acquitted in Ancient Israel

It is the verb form, however, that is somewhat controversial. In a judicial or legal sense in secular Greek the verb meant to *pronounce* someone *free* of all *charges* against them, which in a Biblical parlance means to pronounce or declare someone *righteous*. In hellenistic writings the verb meant to validate or establish a law or principle of law as fair and right.⁵ (This secular meaning is not found in Scripture.)

The forensic sense of the word: to *declare* right or to *acquit* someone of all charges against them comes from the Old Testament, however, (and this is important to note) in the Old Testament this applies *only* to the innocent [Exodus 23:7]. To *declare* righteous is, in fact, to *prove* or show that they are innocent of the charge.⁶ Ben Sira in the 2nd century BCE wrote, “The Lord only is righteous [no other is truly innocent of all sin], and there is none other but he.” [Ecclesiasticus 18:2].

3. Gerhard Kittel. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI: 1974), vol II. page 198.

4. Some, after the use of the Hebrew verb in the Piel stem interpret Paul to mean “the sin offering” but this erodes the force of the actual accomplishment on Calvary. Jesus did not appease God regarding our sin, Jesus in His death, destroyed sin! [Hebrews 9:26].

5. Gerhard Kittel. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI: 1974), vol II. page 211..

6. Ibid, page 212.

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So, when Asaph wrote, “I have cleansed my heart” [Psalm 73:13], he was declaring himself innocent or righteous as regards obedience to the Mosaic Law. “To have a pure or cleansed heart” was declaring one’s self righteous. But bemused, he groused that his devotion was alas “in vain.” He was moaning that living a righteous life should have translated into blessing; but it appears that only the wicked prosper! [Habakkuk 1:4].

The greatest influence on the New Testament use of “righteousness” is the Old Testament. The difference between them, however, which is of critical importance to note, is the declaration or judgment itself. In the Old Testament only innocent persons were declared to be innocent in the judging of a crime. In the New, the guilty—through Christ—are now justified, acquitted of all crime against God. “But to him that believes on him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” [Romans 4:5].

The Objective Aspect of God’s Righteousness

“In Paul the legal usage is plain and indisputable. The opposite of justification is condemnation. For Paul, the verb, to be righteous, does not speak of the new creation, per se, of right conduct⁷ but of a divine *judgment* fulfilled in Christ’s death and resurrection now available by faith. “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again” [Romans 8:34]. As stated in its profound simplicity beginning this discussion: To be declared righteous is “to be pronounced in right standing with God.”

Under law a declaration of acquittal is only available to someone who earned such a recognition by living according to the law, while under grace sinners who accept Christ and believe in His death and resurrection are now judged acquitted [Romans 8:1]. We might use the word “forgiven” but doing so we must elevate the term above a simple resignation to the offense. Forgiveness with God means the record is now expunged—

7. *justum efficere* - to make right

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totally. The Amplified Bible reads, "...so that your sins may be wiped away [blotted out, completely erased]" [Acts 3:19].

It is the decision of a judge to declare a defendant's record wiped of all charges.⁸ This simple declaration is foundational to our faith—not because we fully understand all that the Cross meant to God in either a legal or spiritual sense, but—because our hearts embrace it [Romans 10:9]. This is known as the objective meaning of righteousness, and there is a subjective meaning yet to be presented.

Forensic Declaration of Righteousness

Some called this a forensic use of the word.⁹ Based on Jesus' message of His coming Kingdom [Matthew 6:33] Paul's discussion of righteousness with Jewry had to address righteousness in relation to Torah Law [Romans 3:20]. Paul was caught in a vortex of legal explanations [Romans 7:23]: the law of sin and the mind [Romans 7:23] ; the law of God [Romans 7:25] and of the Spirit [Romans 8:2]. He then cauterized the bleeding

8. There are places where "to be righteous" means to *prove* righteous [Matthew 11:19] or to exercise righteous(ness) [Revelation 22:11] but they are limited in use. Self-justification, which everyone knows is all too real, is also in Scripture [Luke 10:29; 16:15].

9. The preparation for sanctifying grace, or the process of justification came out of a counter-reformation prompted by Lutheran's teaching that justification came by faith only. This conflict may be reduced to four differences.

1. By a justifying faith the Church understands qualitatively the theoretical faith in the truths of Revelation, and demands over and above this faith other acts of preparation for justification.

2. Protestantism, on the other hand, reduces the process of justification to merely a fiduciary faith; and maintains that this faith, exclusive even of good works, is all-sufficient for justification, laying great stress upon the scriptural statement *sola fides justificat*.

3. The Church teaches that justification consists of an actual obliteration of sin and an interior sanctification.

4. Protestantism, on the other hand, makes of the forgiveness of sin merely a concealment of it, so to speak; and of the sanctification a forensic declaration of justification, or an external imputation of the justice of Christ. [Accessed 8/6/21 *New Advent Encyclopedia on Sanctifying Grace*. <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06701a.htm>]

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of endless debate by exclaiming “There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus” [Romans 8:1 NLT]. “No condemnation” is a declaration of justification.

The Judge of the universe and of Heaven upon the Savior’s death has ruled and we are absolved of all crimes against God if we accept this by faith! Some take this as addressing “original sin.” Some see this as up to the moment of salvation. Others in an most absolute and permanent sense say that our sins—all of them: past, present and future—have been adjudicated in Heaven’s court because Jesus took the punishment on Himself for them all [which He, indeed, did do!]. Perhaps, there is no more to understand here than 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

The Subjective Aspect of God’s Righteousness

There is a subjective or relational aspect to righteousness. Notwithstanding, the judicial act God in Christ (the objective aspect of God’s Righteous Act) provided on Calvary and our acquittal remains foundational to every other aspect of righteousness. The Theological Dictionary reads, “The act of salvation is a continuing present.”¹⁰ This is true because of faith. The very word *faith* speaks of faithfulness which speaks of a continuing trust relationship. This is what is meant by the subjective perspective on God’s declared righteousness.

“With the heart,” Paul taught, “one believes unto righteousness” [Romans 10;10]. Paul taught a doctrine of a justification *by faith* which makes the sentence of acquittal a continuing part of our experience in Christ. In American jurisprudence when a trial ends in acquittal the Constitution’s 5th Amendment states that “Double Jeopardy” attaches or a judge can dismiss a case “with prejudice” which means this case is forever closed and decided and the person cannot be tried again

10. Gerhard Kittel. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI: 1974), vol II. page 217..

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for this crime. The main difference here with Christ was He was on trial for our sins and found guilty!

With the heart one accepts what Christ did for them on the Cross and believes now that they are declared forgiven, free of all guilt of sin. A true faith or belief in this provision of the Cross means a life lived free of the sin that sent our Savior to that Cross in the first place. A believer exercises a trust in the Savior's work on Calvary to save them from their sins and they accept the Savior's death and resurrection *by faith*. Christ not only took our place on Calvary to justly fulfill the requirement justice demanded because of sin. Christ provided through His resurrection a newness of life to be lived in Him [Galatians 2:20]. All this scholars understand is nuanced in the word *righteousness*. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." [Romans 6:11].

Righteousness and Justification

The word *righteousness*, *then*, means, among other possible nuanced ideas, *justification*. But in what verse[s]? The actual word *righteousness* is never translated justification in any English version,¹¹ with the exception of Galatians 2:21 in the RSV. And the Amplified Bible in Romans 10:10 reads, "For with the heart a person believes [in Christ as Savior] resulting in his *justification* ... [that is, being made righteous—being freed of the guilt of sin and made acceptable to God]." Three other translations replace the word *righteousness* with the verb "is justified" [NIV, ESV, and RSV]. The force of "justification" behind these verses is more from the Old Testament parlance than in the New.¹² In the Old it is generally interpreted "Justice." In Genesis 18:19, a number of translations seem to be indecisive and translated "doing righteousness *and* justice" or "doing what is right *and* just."

11. 17 different English versions were compared.

12. The Greek word δικαιοσύνη is found 93 times in the LXX

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Punitive Justice

The forensic or punitive¹³ aspect of God's righteousness is inherent in the verb form of the word: to be declared righteous.¹⁴ Let's take a step back and look at this entire class of words all stemming from the word δίκη [díke] which means "justice." Justice includes the judicial review and decision, the sentencing as well as the punishment meted out. Justice is the work for a judge¹⁵ to execute or bring about; so, this word is legal or according to "law." We will not need to go deeper here. Just a surface study, in grammar, of the words for *judge*, *justice*, *justification*, tells us that the force of these terms is an official declaration and not the ability to *make* right. In American courts a not guilty verdict does not imply innocence, No judge can take away the offense, only legally expunge it from the record. The meaning "to make righteous ...is extremely rare if not altogether doubtful."¹⁶ So "to judge" is to "pronounce judgment" [Romans 2:13]. It is on the limitation of this idea in the Old Testament. Solomon prayed, "Listen from heaven and make a just decision about your servants' claims. Condemn the guilty party, declare the other innocent, and give both of them what they deserve." [1 Kings 8:32 NET- Underline added].

The Righteousness of God

Instead of discussing righteousness as an abstract idea, Paul clarifies referring to *The Righteousness of God*.¹⁷ The Righteousness of God is centered in the Cross [Romans 3:25 5:9].

13. inflicting or intended as punishment

14. Joseph Thayer. *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon*. Hendrickson Publishers. Peabody MA.: 14th printing, 2019) page. 150.

15. The Greek for judge is κριτής [krités] from the word, "to decide" in an official sense.

16. Ibid.

17. The Righteousness of God can mean either, The righteousness "from God" which God gifts to man [a subjective use: What God gives to us] or the righteousness attributed to God [the objective use: What describes God's character]. The "objective" use: who God is. The "subjective" use What God demonstrates in salvation.

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“When the apostle makes his most solemn and weighty pronouncements concerning the establishment of salvation, he uses the righteousness of God instead of the simple righteousness.”¹⁸

When talking about *God’s* righteousness and not righteousness in general, we are describing God’s punitive or judicial ruling. This meaning is primarily based on Old Testament parlance as in Deuteronomy 33:21 where Moses, speaking of the tribe of Gad, proclaimed, “he came with the leaders of the people, he obeyed the righteous laws of the LORD [the righteousness of the LORD] and his ordinances with Israel.” [NET]. The KJV translates: “the justice of the LORD.”

While God’s justice is more readily explained in Paul’s theology using the words, “The judgment of God”¹⁹ [Romans 1:32], it seems worth asking, “Does this satisfy *every* use of the phrase ‘The Righteousness of God’ in Paul’s writings?” It seems appropriate to review the 6 times Paul uses the phrase (and once each by Peter and James). The immediate question is: Can we translate “The Righteousness of God” with the phrase, “The Justice of God”? Are all 8 verses referencing the Savior’s punitive death on the Cross?

The word “righteousness” occurs 90 times in the New Testament,²⁰ some of which are worthy our immediate attention. In particular the 7 times the New Testament speaks of a “righteousness by faith.” This will require writing this book. My interest in this most important Biblical truth is to know if there might be an additional meaning to *righteousness*—a more encompassing of all that the Savior’s death provided, more—than a punitive measure. Did God only pass sentence (punish sin: a punitive act) against sin; or did He, who is the Creator, also

18. Gerhard Kittel. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI: 1974), vol II. page 203.

19. τὸ δίκαιωμα τοῦ θεοῦ

20. Matthew 6:1 says “Take heed not to do your righteousness before men” while the Received Text [KJV] uses the word “alms” instead of “righteousness.”

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remove that sin (an expiatory act) and “make all things new” [2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:15] restoring fellowship between Him and us? And can any or all of these aspects of Calvary’s Truth be nuanced in this single word, *righteousness*?

The Theological Dictionary begins: “God’s righteousness [is at] a conjunction²¹ of judgment and grace which He enjoys and demonstrates by showing righteousness, by imparting it as His pardoning sentence, but which also draws into His kingdom as new life... It will be fully manifested at the last judgment.”²² (underline added). ... “The Righteousness of God includes justification. ... It is imparted to [the believer] as a new quality. [This is a forensic justification, but] Forensically does not mean ‘as if’ he were righteous, since the sovereign sentence of God is genuinely pronounced. Nor does it mean that moral rectitude is attained. What it does mean is ... right before God. ... We are not in the sphere of human jurisprudence. We are dealing with the divine Judge.”²³

Scriptures to turn into Chapters

This work is an effort to interpret and understand some of the many Scripture that speak of God’s righteousness and ours by faith. Here are the half dozen Pauline references, to which will be added some that speak of righteousness generally.

1. Romans 1:17 “For therein is **the righteousness of God** revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, **The** just shall live by faith.”
2. Romans 3:5 “But if our unrighteousness commend **the righteousness of God**, what shall we say? *Is God* unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man)”

21. two or more events or things occurring at the same point in time or space

22. Gerhard Kittel. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI: 1974), vol II. page 203.

23. Ibid. page 204.

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3. Romans 3:21-22 “But now **the righteousness of God** without **the** law is manifested, being witnessed by **the** law and **the** prophets;
4. Even **the righteousness of God** *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:”
5. Romans 10:3 “For they being ignorant of **God's righteousness**, and going about to establish their own **righteousness**, have not submitted themselves unto **the righteousness of God.**”
6. 2 Corinthians 5:21 “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.”

Linguistically speaking, we consent to this that, righteousness implies justification. Both words share a common root idea, justice, rightness. If we appeal to the Old Testament use, we are always brought back to the Law of God, Torah Law, because *uprightness* [the Hebrew idea] was conditioned on obedience to that Law. But was not this “law” the provision of God’s Covenantal arrangement? If so, are we not under a new covenant now? How might this add value and meaning to this most sacred term,

Hebrews 5:13-6:2

How are we, for example, to interpret Hebrews 5:13-14? Here the writer speaks of believers whose spiritual growth is stunted, stuck in an endless infancy, and inexperienced in righteousness. Righteousness here speaks to an ability to know right from wrong, good from evil, something some believers—at least as observed by the writer to the Hebrews—have not possessed. The 6th chapter begins with an elementary curriculum for all believers: the value of repentance and faith in Christ as well as the significance of baptisms and prayer. We all should learn early about the centrality of Christ’s resurrection to our faith. But the persons addressed here are, metaphorically speaking, still toddlers ever gravitating toward the proverbial

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“hot stove” or laying stress on unimportant religious practices instead of becoming living testimonies to the provisions of Calvary.

Hebrews 6:4-8 then theologically startles us, cautioning against replacing—if I may interpret—a life in the Son with a sheer religiosity. Righteousness seems here to mean something more than God’s punitive justice which is (as we have been saying so far) scholarship’s primary emphasis.

The Word ‘Of’

In addition, scholars love to debate the significance of the word “of.” Here is not the place for a grammar lesson but when there is more than one interpretation of the relationship between the 2 words connected by “of” (in this case “Righteousness” and “God”) a discussion ensues. Take, for example, the phrase: “for the love of a woman” which can mean a woman’s love for a man [subjective] or a man’s love for a woman [objective]. Take, now, as an example, *The Love of God*, which might be easier to explain.

- ◆ This relationship can be subjective as in: “In this was manifested the love of God [love from God] toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him” [1 John 4:9].
- ◆ This relationship can be objective as in: “But whoever keeps His word, in Him verily is the love of God (our love for God) perfected” [1John 2:5]

So is this true with “The righteousness of God.” It is both

- ◆ **Subjective:** God’s righteousness was His act of justify us: Christ paying the penalty for our sins.
- ◆ **Objective:** God’s righteousness is His covenant faithfulness—something we want to show in this work.

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A Summary

Paul then disassociated God's righteousness from law. "The righteousness of God without the law is manifested" [Romans 3:21. underline added]. Salvation also offered to the Gentiles had to be free of Torah legal requirement (for they did not live by these nor observe them). What might be less evident is that God's righteousness represented more than forgiveness or a proclamation of righteousness. It represented a corresponding change in reality, in "... hearts ... strengthened in holiness to be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints" [1 Thessalonians 3:13]. Though the "Righteousness of God" included forgiveness for sin because Jesus' death satisfied any judicial sentence by God, for Paul, it exceeded a punitive declaration. We might have expected Paul to say to Titus [3:5] "He [God] saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy." This suffices to support God's declaration of justification every believer enjoys by faith. But Paul went on, adding, "through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit,"

When Paul concluded, "if righteousness comes by the law, then Christ is dead in vain, gratuitous, unwarranted or without effect" [Galatians 2:21] He was clearly referencing a justification by faith. But if there were no more to God's Righteousness, we should fail to appreciate the first part of this verse. Paul testified, "I do not frustrate [nullify, rejected] the grace of God." If the declaration of righteousness was alone Paul's quest, the only way God's grace could be said to be "rejected" is by refusing to accept such a salvation. But this is not Paul's thought here. Paul began by affirming the Christ is alive within him. Paul's life, as a child of God, now is taken up completely in the work that Christ called him to [Galatians 2:20]. Frustrating grace has to include the notion of interfering with Christ's efforts by personal and selfish endeavors. If this be a possible understanding of these verses, then, the righteousness Paul is talking about, that does not derive from any legal requirement, is far more than a declaration of forgiveness. "By the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto

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justification of life." [Romans 5:18]. "The righteousness of God does not only justify the sinner, it makes alive.