

## God's Righteousness vs. Man's Righteousness

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by Wayne Goff

*"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" Romans 10:3*

In the context of Romans 10, Paul is talking about the Jews' ignorance of God's righteousness. But we could easily make a general application to the world and its myriad religions which are all man-made. Think of the many ways and means by which men try to justify themselves and you will understand what is meant.

### **Man's Righteousness?**

The Jewish people had twisted God's Mosaic system by their oral traditions (now called Mishnah) and had effectively destroyed their submission and obedience to God's Word.

Jesus contended with the Pharisees and scribes over this very issue when they came to condemn Jesus' disciples for transgressing "the tradition of the elders" (Matt. 15:2). Jesus' response to them was to ask another question: "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" (Matt. 15:3). Human religious tradition is meaningless; it is sinful when it violates God's commandments! Jesus summed up the problem when He said: "Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" (Matt. 15:7-9). Jesus' scathing denunciation of man-made religion was not popular then, nor would it be today. But it is the truth.

The apostle Peter continued the thought when he wrote: "knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Man's salvation was purchased with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God! Man is redeemed from his "aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers" when he renounces idolatry or man-made religion and turns to the true, living God. This is a very serious matter and one that man is slow to appreciate.

### **God's Righteousness**

In Romans, Paul is not talking about God's own personal righteousness when he speaks of "God's righteousness." Instead, he is speaking of the way by which God makes man righteous. Man is helpless to become righteous once he has sinned (Rom. 3:23). A loving, caring but holy God stepped in and offered His only begotten Son on the cruel cross of Calvary to remedy the problem! The blood of Jesus Christ can wash away our sins when nothing else can (Rom. 5:6-10). Praise be to God for His loving grace and mercy. When we humbly turn to God in repentance and obey His conditions for salvation, then we can be made righteous once more.

The New Testament speaks of this righteousness: "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:4-7).

The apostle Paul identified this as "God's righteousness" and said in Philippians 3: 8-9 ".....that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith."

The Jews of whom Paul wrote refused to submit to the righteousness of God because they believed they were already righteous! (Consider Matt. 9:11-13). Man today will not come to God in humble submission to the gospel until he realizes he is lost in sin and cannot extricate himself. Dear reader, do not be one of that number!

Believe in Jesus as God's Son. Believe that Jesus died for your sins and repent of them. Confess your faith in Jesus Christ and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins (Jn. 8:24; Lk. 13:3; Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 22:16).