



Romans: Whose Righteousness?

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.—Romans 3:21-22

Gods' grace confers the righteousness of God to us, through faith in Jesus. Conversely, the righteousness of religion must be earned by obedience to law. God's grace is amazing—it doesn't play by religious rules.

- We humans would rather earn what we believe we deserve from God. We would rather gain righteousness, like the commercial says, *"the old fashioned way."* Righteousness *"the old fashioned way"* in the old covenant (before the new covenant in Christ) was "credited" (Romans 4:3) by faith. But righteousness *"the old fashioned way"* was transactional according to law, by/under/through the law, not by faith in Jesus Christ.

- **The righteousness of God, by grace through faith**, is not of ourselves, but of God. A gazillion lifetimes of human effort cannot acquire the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God is apart from any law, not derived from law, but freely given by God's grace.

- God's grace goes head-to-head with our human, religious and legal sense of justice and fair play. When most people talk about the justice of God they are actually talking about their desire to see other people "get what they have coming to them."

- Even when people are inclined to accept and embrace God's grace for themselves, they find his same grace applied to other people to be soft-hearted and even permissive.

One of the huge problems we have with God's grace is that it confounds our every expectation of who and what God "should" be—which is an incredible statement on its own, isn't it?

So, God should consult us to see how he should behave and act and react??

God's grace proclaims that ALL our attempts to achieve righteousness are, as Isaiah proclaims in Isaiah 64:6, "...like filthy rags." The Hebrew word for "filthy rags" is probably the same word used for a menstrual cloth. How useful to God or anyone is a "filthy rag"?

Some respond, "Wait just a minute God! Are you saying after all I have done for you, after all my efforts, my sacrifices and hard work to earn your love and approval, they amount to a menstrual cloth?! But I don't display menstrual cloths in my trophy case where I keep certificates about all my religious accomplishments. What are you saying God?"

God answers, "Yes, my child! I think you are beginning to get the picture. That picture doesn't fit, does it? I have a better deal for you."

Along with its twin, the book of Galatians, the book of Romans is the bedrock of the gospel, for Christ followers the core of their convictions and the foundation of God's amazing grace.

Romans, more than any other book of the Bible, is a logical, careful deconstruction of human religion and a step by step construction of the righteousness of God bestowed as a gift, upon those who believe.

The book of Romans lays siege to human notions that our task in life is to please and appease God via our righteous deeds. God is already in

love with us—the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ has been given to us, by the grace of God, if we wish to embrace and accept it.

Christless religion is a lie because its primary faith is based on the steps that must be taken, tests that must be passed, regulations that must be adhered to, and rituals and ceremonies that must be performed to make God happy and keep him happy.

Christless righteousness is a cheap counterfeit, an addiction that leads to slavery and misery.

Romans demolishes Christless religion and all of its deceptive ideas—it takes Christ less religion and buries it as Paul carefully places and hammers in one nail after another into the coffin of Christless religion. Paul's case for grace is air tight.

Romans is the case against religion. It is written much like a legal brief, as an attack on the stronghold of religion and all of its lies, misrepresentations, deceptions, prevarications, snipe hunts and wild goose chases which enslaves all who follow its teachings and practices.

This case against religion in the book of Romans is the precedent and summation that we humans need not live under condemnation, for we are set free.

Christless religion is bad news—the gospel of Jesus Christ is incredibly, almost too-good-to-be-true news. Romans 8:1 says, **THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS ARE NOT CONDEMNED.** □

Join us for "Romans: Whose Righteousness?" at the audio teaching ministry of Christianity Without the Religion, the week of November 10, 2019.