

CHRIST, OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

BIBLE TEXT : Romans 2:17-29; 3:1-31; 9:30-33.

LESSON 382 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "Whoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Romans 9:33)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Romans 2:17-29

¹⁷ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,
¹⁸ And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;
¹⁹ And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,
²⁰ An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.
²¹ Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?
²² Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?
²³ Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?
²⁴ For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.
²⁵ For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.
²⁶ Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision?
²⁷ And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

To Be Good

One of the first things a child learns is that he should be good. A baby soon learns what is meant when mother shakes her head and says, "No, no." Before a child goes to school, many times he has heard these words: "Be a good boy" or "Be a good girl." A child learns in school that he should be good in order to have the approval of the teacher and the other children. Some children try very hard to do what is required of them because they want to be liked, and they want to please others. Other children want their own way, and say that they will not be good. Often in a child's life there is a constant struggle between doing what is right and what is wrong.

Sin in the Heart

When the child was born there was a seed of sin in his heart because of the first sin that was committed in the Garden of Eden. Satan tempted the first man and woman to disobey God. Because they yielded to the temptation, sin came into their heart and has been passed on to every succeeding generation. As the child grows, so does the seed. In time, what was just a seed will become as roots of sin, trees of sin, and fruits of sin. This does not happen to just some people but to every person. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." The sins may be small. They may be hidden so that man cannot see them, but God does. So long as sin is in the heart, a person cannot please God.

God's Love

The Lord loves everyone. He has a plan so that each one can have his sins forgiven. When sin is gone, the love of God helps one to be good.

God made coats of animal skins and clothed Adam and Eve. Blood was shed when the animals were slain to provide cover for Adam and Eve, the first sinners.

Offerings to God

From that time on, men felt their need for God. Abel, a son of Adam and Eve, brought an offering to God, which was accepted (**Genesis 4:4** ⁴ And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:). Noah, the man who built the Ark and was spared in the flood, built an altar to God (Genesis 8:20). Abraham, father of the faithful, and Jacob, whose sons became the heads of the 12 tribes of the Children of Israel, built altars unto the Lord (**Genesis 12:7** ⁷ And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him **Genesis 35:3** ³ And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.).

The Law

On Mount Sinai, God gave the Law to Moses for the Children of Israel. A part of the Law is known as the Ten Commandments (**Exodus 20:3-17** ³ Thou shalt have no other gods before me. ⁴ Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: ⁵ Thou shalt not bow down thyself to

the law?

²⁸ For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh:

²⁹ But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

Romans 3:1-31

¹ What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit *is there* of circumcision?

² Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

³ For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

⁴ God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

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)

⁶ God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?

⁷ For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?

⁸ And not *rather*, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just.

⁹ What then? are we better *than they*? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin;

¹⁰ As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

¹¹ There is none that understandeth, there is none that

them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; ⁶ And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

⁷ Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. ⁸

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰ But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: ¹¹ For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. ¹² Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. ¹³ Thou shalt not kill. ¹⁴ Thou shalt not commit adultery. ¹⁵

Thou shalt not steal. ¹⁶ Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. ¹⁷ Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.). The Law told them what was right and what was wrong. When the Children of Israel sinned, they brought offerings to God, according to the Law, and God forgave their sins. Many people obeyed the Law and lived a life pleasing to God.

As time went on, some of the people were careless about offering sacrifices to God. Then there were others who changed the Law. There were times when the Children of Israel were captives and could not worship in the Temple as God had directed. There were times when there was no Temple, which was their church, for, it had been destroyed by enemies. But the Law and the sacrifices pointed to Jesus, who was to come, One who can change the heart so a person can be good.

Jesus

In due time, Jesus came to live on earth. His name was called "JESUS" because He was to save the people from their sins (**Matthew 1:21** ²¹ And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.). He began to preach and to teach. He did not destroy the Law and the teachings of the prophets but He came to fulfil them (**Matthew 5:17** ¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.). After Jesus came, it was not enough to keep the Law. Jesus brought a better way – a better covenant with better promises (**Hebrews 8:6** ⁶ But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises), better sacrifices (**Hebrews 9:23** ²³ It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.), and a better hope (**Hebrews 7:19** ¹⁹ For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope *did*; by the which we draw nigh unto God.).

Man looks on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart (**1 Samuel 16:7** ⁷ But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.). The Psalmist tells that God looks at the heart, and tells who will qualify for Heaven: "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart" (Psalm 15:2). It is not enough to have "clean hands" but one must also have a "pure heart" (**Psalms 24:3-4** ³ Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? ⁴ He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.).

The Jews were the people of God. It was not enough to be a

seeketh after God.

¹² They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

¹³ Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

¹⁴ Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:

¹⁵ Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:

¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:

¹⁷ And the way of peace have they not known:

¹⁸ There is no fear of God before their eyes.

¹⁹ Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

²¹ But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

²² 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:

²³ For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

²⁴ Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

²⁵ Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

²⁶ To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him

Jew outwardly but he is a Jew who is one inwardly -- in the heart and in the spirit -- not just obeying the letter of the Law (**Romans 2:28-29** ²⁸ For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: ²⁹ But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.). The rich young ruler asked Jesus what he should do to have eternal life. He had kept the commandments but he felt that he needed to do more than that. Jesus said that he lacked one thing. The rich young ruler loved his wealth more than God, and he went away sorrowful (**Luke 18:23** ²³ And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.).

Because He was the Son of God, Jesus lived without sin. Jesus was an example to us. It is His plan and desire that we should live a good life, a life without sin. God wants His people to be holy (**1 Peter 1:16** ¹⁶ Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.). Not only did Jesus live to be our example, but He also died for us. He gave His life and shed his Blood to redeem us. He was our Lamb offering (See Lesson 367). He died once for all, "the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God" (I Peter 3:18).

None Righteous

Many people have tried to live good lives but unless they have Jesus in their heart they cannot live pleasing to God. In the Bible, we read that "there is none righteous, no not one." That means that a person, as he is, in his own goodness and without the righteousness of Christ, is not righteous. No one is righteous before he is saved. To be righteous is to be free from wrong, free from guilt, and free from sin. Only the Blood of Jesus can take away those things, which are displeasing to God. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The Wrong Master

There are some people who do not try to be good. Satan is their master and they do what he tells them to do. They know that they are doing wrong. They have a guilty conscience. Many times they are ashamed. They need to change masters. They need to repent of their sins and ask Jesus to come in to live in their hearts. If they believe the Bible and obey Jesus, He will forgive all that is wrong and will help them to live right.

Filthy Rags

Even though a person tries to live right without Jesus, he can only fail. The Prophet Isaiah said, "All our righteousness are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6), which is not a very pleasant sight.

Jesus spoke about people who trusted in themselves and their own righteousness. He told of two men who went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee (a religious man) who prayed with himself and recounted all his good deeds. The other man, a publican, admitted that he was a sinner and asked for mercy. He humbled himself before God and knew that he needed more than his own righteousness. "This man went down to his house justified rather than the other" (Luke 18:14).

Isaiah also said, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). Just to want one's own way is refusing God's way. To fail to trust God and to depend upon Him makes one guilty before God. A man can live the way he **thinks** is good but that will not put his name in the Book of Life. The Apostle Paul, before his conversion, lived a very strict life. He was sincere and thought that he was doing good. One day a great light shone upon him and God spoke out of Heaven to him that he was persecuting the Lord. Paul was willing to do what God wanted him to do. He put aside his way and his ideas; and he prayed (**Acts 9:11** ¹¹ And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street

which believeth in Jesus.

²⁷ Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

²⁹ *Is he* the God of the Jews only? *is he* not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also:

³⁰ Seeing *it is* one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith.

³¹ Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Romans 9:30-33

³⁰ What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith.

³¹ But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness.

³² Wherefore? Because *they sought it* not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

³³ As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth,). A change came into his heart and life. From that time on, Paul lived a different kind of life – he was obedient to God.

A Stony Heart

God wants our heart yielded to Him. Then our deeds will be good and acceptable to Him. The Prophet Ezekiel described an unsaved person as having a "stony heart" (**Ezekiel 11:19** ¹⁹ And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:). God wants to change that to a heart of flesh. The Lord said, "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD" (Jeremiah 24:7).

A Changed Heart

If you are not saved, ask God to forgive your sins and change your heart. Obey God, believe His promises, and have faith in Jesus. We can become righteous and live righteously each day only as we have faith in Jesus. Read the Bible and pray each day before going to school, to work, or to play. Jesus is all we need. To us, Jesus is "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30).

QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to be righteous?
2. How can a person live righteously?
3. Why should one live righteously?
4. Who is our righteousness?
5. How does a person's own righteousness appear to God?
6. Who can change the heart?
7. In order to go to Heaven what kind of heart must one have?
8. In order to go to Heaven what kind of hands must one have?
9. How can a person be saved?
10. What can we do each day to keep the victory?