

Bible Study: Tues., Jan. 10, 2023

The Most Important Chapter in the Bible

I. Introduction: Gospel Singers

II. More than any other Biblical teaching, the Biblical doctrine of righteousness is the single most important element in reaching spiritual maturity. I wrote my book, *The Sin Myth*, as an explanation of what the Bible says about righteousness. I teach righteousness more than any other subject, including healing. And the Scripture is clear about this truth: no believer will ever graduate out of spiritual diapers without understanding this truth.

Heb. 5:11-14 — “We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” (NIV)

The whole teaching of righteousness rests upon Genesis 15. Even more specifically Gen. 15:6, a verse that is quoted three times in the New Testament.

Gen. 15:6 — “Abraham believed God, and the Lord counted it to Him as righteousness.”

Rom. 4:3 — “What does Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’”

Gal. 3:5-7 — “6 So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

James 2:23 — “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

II. There are two kinds of righteousness in the Scripture.

A. “Law” or obedience to all the Law of Moses. The Law works like this: God gives His Laws to men. Men who obey the Law live, prosper and gain eternal life. Men who disobey the Law either secure forgiveness from God for their sin or they fall into death, judgment, condemnation and Hell.

**1. The very first commandment was given not to Moses but to Adam.
What were the consequences?**

Gen. 2:16 — *“And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

2. Moses presented the Law to the Jews as a path to righteousness.

Deut. 6:24-25 — *“The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. 25 And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.”*

3. Three times, the people accepted the Law and swore that they would obey it. (Ex. 19:8, 24:3 and 24:7) Once was before God even gave them the Ten Commandments. The other two times came afterward.

4. The problem with the Law was that no one, no one, no one, no one has ever fully obeyed the Law, and God does not differentiate between little sins and big sins. He prescribed only one penalty for sin, and that was death.

Rom. 3:10-12, 20 — *“There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away. They have together become worthless; There is no one who does good, not even one.” ... Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.”*

B. The second kind of righteousness is righteousness by faith through grace — or simply “grace.” And that didn’t begin with Jesus; that began with Abraham in Gen. 15.

1. John 1:17 — *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

2. Gen. 15 — *After this, the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” 2 But Abram said, “Sovereign Lord, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” 3 And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” 4 Then the word of the Lord came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” 5 He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” 6 Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to*

him as righteousness.

3. Rom. 4:1-8, 23-24 — *What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? 2 If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. 3 What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” 4 Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. 5 However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.” (Psalm 32:1-2) ...*

...The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

4. Gal. 3:10-14 — *For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” (Deut. 27:26) 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” (Hab. 2:4) 12 *The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” (Lev. 18:5). 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” (Deut. 21:23) 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.**

5. James 2:14-24 — *“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18 But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.*

20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? 21 Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by

what he did. 23 And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,”[e] and he was called God’s friend. 24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

A. Definition

- 1. A rite of passage is a ceremony, ritual or experience of the passage which occurs as an individual leaves one group to enter another. It involves a significant change of status in society or cultural structure.**
- 2. A ritual, event, or experience that marks or constitutes a major milestone or significant change in a person's life**
- 3. Anthropologists break down rites of passage into three parts: separation, transformation and integration**

B. Confirmation	Getting a Driver's License
First Communion	18th or 21st Birthday
Marriage	A First Sexual Experience

III. So what is there in the spiritual realm that would qualify as a rite of passage?

A. Being Born Again

B. Receiving the Holy Spirit (John G. Lake)

C. Coming into a Revelation of Righteousness & Grace

Here's the truth. In the Kingdom of God, our rite of passage into spiritual maturity happens when we consciously receive God's gift of righteousness. It's not until we receive God's gift of His own flawless righteousness that we can successfully come into all of the powers of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Heb. 10:1-2 (NET) — *For the law possesses a shadow of the good things to come but not the reality itself, and is therefore completely unable, by the same sacrifices offered continually, year after year, to perfect those who come to worship. 2 For otherwise would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers would have been purified once for all and so have no further consciousness of sin?*

Rom. 5:17 — *“For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!”*

Heb. 5:12-14 — *“In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to*