



SHOULD WE PURSUE

RIGHTEOUSNESS?

*What is righteousness? What does righteousness have to do with salvation? Should we seek to be righteous?
By Elder George Kinney*

Do you believe Scripture? If you do, then you believe the Savior when He said, "You do err not know the Scriptures nor the power of the Almighty One," Mt. 22:29. Could Yahshua's statement apply to us today as it did in the day that He said these words?

Yahshua also said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Yahweh," Mat. 4:4. Do you believe this statement or have you been deceived to excuse yourself from attempting to apply this in your life?

Yahshua tells us to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect (Mt. 5:48). We are told to be perfect with Yahweh, "Thou shalt be perfect with Yahweh thy Mighty One," Dt. 18:13. Yahshua also said, "...if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments," Mt. 19:17.

We are encouraged, "**Awake to righteousness, and sin not:** for some have not the knowledge of Yahweh: I speak this to your shame," 1 Cor. 15:34. Has this knowledge been taken away from you?

The Apostle John also encouraged, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Yahshua the Messiah the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world. And hereby **we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.** He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But **whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of Yahweh perfected:** hereby know we that we are in him.," 1 Jn. 2:1-5.

Would Scripture be telling us to be perfect if it were impossible to do so? Yahshua, made for a little while lower than the angels, in a body as we are, made like His brothers in every way, tempted in all ways as we are, was without sin, "But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and **was made in the likeness of men:** and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the stake," Phil. 2:7-8. "**But we see Yahshua, Who was made a little lower than the angels,** for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that He by the grace of

Yahweh should taste death for every man...**Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same;** that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil...Wherefore **in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren,** that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to Yahweh, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people," Heb. 2:9, 14, 17. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of Yahweh in Him," 2 Cor. 5:21.

DELIVERANCE FROM TEMPTATION

He was even offered all the kingdoms of the world by the devil, if He would worship him (Mt. 4:8-9, Lk. 4:5-7). Yahshua's answer was, "Thou shalt worship Yahweh your Mighty One, and Him only shalt thou serve," Mt. 4:10 & Lk. 4:8. Yahshua asked, "...what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Yahshua set the perfect example of facing temptation, yet choosing to serve Yahweh rather than seeking to gain the whole world.

Yahshua is able to help those who are tempted, "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted," Heb. 2:18.

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but Yahweh is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. 10:13. That way of escape is revealed to be Yahshua the Messiah.

THE MEANING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Righteousness means right. The righteous one is scarcely saved, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the unrighteous and the sinner appear? So we certainly should be striving for righteousness. We ought to IMMEDIATELY receive the Word with gladness, and not let the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things



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entering in, choke the Word, “And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, **And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful,**” Mk. 4:16-19.

It is righteousness for us when we observe to do all Yahweh’s commandments, “And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before Yahweh our Mighty One, as He hath commanded us,” Dt. 6:25. Scripture throughout indicates that we are to be keeping His commandments, “Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates of the city,” Rev. 22:14. “Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who has ears to hear, let him hear,” Mt. 13:43. “For the eyes of Yahweh are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of Yahweh is against them that do evil,” 1 Pet. 3:12.

We are not justified by works of the law, “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,” Ro. 3:20. Being declared right is without paying, by Yahweh’s favour (grace) through the redemption which is in the Messiah, Yahshua, “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in the Messiah Yahshua,” Ro. 3:24. But the justified ones are now doers of the law, righteous, having repented of sin, “For not the hearers of the law are just before Yahweh, but the doers of the law shall be justified,” Ro. 2:13.

THE PENALTY OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

The righteous one needs to stay righteous to live; but it will not deliver him in the day of his transgression, “But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take *any* person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, ‘O wicked

man, thou shalt surely die’; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, ‘If our transgressions and our sins *be* upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?’ Say unto them, ‘*As* I live,’ saith the Sovereign Yahweh, ‘I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?’ Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, ‘The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his *righteousness* in the day that he sinneth.’ When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, ‘Thou shalt surely die’; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; *If* the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live. Yet the children of thy people say, The way of Yahweh is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. Yet ye say, The way of Yahweh is not equal. O ye house of Israel, **I will judge you every one after his ways,**” Ez. 33:6-20. “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die,” Ez. 18:24.

Yahshua said, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of the Mighty One,” Lk. 9:62.

The book of Hebrews witnesses, “For it is impos-



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sible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of Yahweh, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they impale to themselves the Son of the Mighty One afresh, and put Him to an open shame," Heb. 6:4-6.

All unrighteousness is sin (1 Jn. 5:17). Sin is lawlessness, the transgression of the law (1 Jn. 3:4). Therefore, being sin, unrighteousness is lawlessness. Whatsoever is not of/from faith (believing) is sin (Ro. 14:23). Thus, all that is not of faith is lawlessness. Sin, lawlessness and unrighteousness are used synonymously. (See The Scriptures translation footnote page 1188).

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

Apart from law keeping (although we do something by believing), righteousness is also accounted to us for faith. In Gen. 15:6 Abram's/Abraham's belief in Yahweh is counted to him for righteousness. Paul also touches on this in Romans chapter 4.

Likewise, it will be counted to us who believe in Him who raised up Yahshua our Master from the dead (Ro. 4:23-25). And to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the irreverent, his faith is accounted for righteousness (v. 5). See also verses 11, 13, 16 (The Moffatt translation is an understandable rendition of Romans 4).

It is essential that we have faith, believing what Yahweh and Yahshua did for our justification. Although justified (declared right) by belief (faith) and by Yahshua's blood (Ro. 5:1, 9), we shall be saved by HIS LIFE (v. 10).

Yahshua said, "...because I live, you will live also," Jn. 14:19, last part. (See also Ro. 4:25 NIV and 1 Cor. 15:17) "For by favour you have been saved THROUGH FAITH, and that not of yourselves; it is the GIFT of the Mighty One, not of works, lest anyone should boast; for we are His workmanship, created in the Messiah, Yahshua, unto good works, which the Almighty prepared beforehand that we should walk in them," Eph. 2:8-10. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by favour; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all," Ro. 4:16.

Faith (belief), if it does not have works, is dead (Jas. 2:17).

The earnest prayer of a righteous one accomplisheth much (Jas. 5:16); and the prayer of belief (faith)

shall save the sick (v. 15). Remember to consider Ro. 14:23 stating, whatever is not from faith is sin.

THE POWER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

The following Scriptures are given for your consideration. They reveal the power of righteousness: "Open ye the gates, that **the righteous nation** which keepeth the truth may enter in," Isa. 26:2.

"The fear of the wicked, it shall come upon him: but the desire of **the righteous** shall be granted," Prov. 10:24.

"Yahweh openeth the eyes of the blind: Yahweh raiseth them that are bowed down: Yahweh loveth **the righteous**," Psa. 146:8.

"The mouth of **the righteous** speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment," Psa. 37:30.

"For Thou, Yahweh, wilt bless **the righteous**; with favour wilt Thou compass him as with a shield," Psa. 5:12.

"The name of Yahweh is a strong tower: **the righteous** runneth into it, and is safe," Prov. 18:10.

"**The righteousness** of the perfect shall direct his way: but the wicked shall fall by his own wickedness. **The righteousness** of the upright shall deliver them: but the transgressors shall be taken in their own naughtiness," Prov. 11:5-6.

"He loveth **righteousness** and judgment: the earth is full of the goodness of Yahweh," Psa. 33:5.

"For the righteous Yahweh loveth **righteousness**; His countenance doth behold the upright," Psa. 11:7.

"In **the way of righteousness** is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death," Prov. 12:28.

"Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth **righteousness** at all times," Psa. 106:3.

"...**the work of righteousness** shall be peace; and **the effect of righteousness** quietness and assurance for ever," Isa. 32:17.

"Cast thy burden upon Yahweh, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer **the righteous** to be moved," Psa. 55:22.

"The desire of **the righteous** is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath," Prov. 11:23.

"Yahweh rewarded me according to **my righteousness**; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me," Psa. 18:20.

"**The righteous** is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead," Prov. 11:8.

"The fruit of **the righteous** is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise," Prov. 11:30.

"Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye **obey**: whether of sin unto death, or of **obedience unto righteousness**?" Ro. 6:16.



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That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might favour (grace) reign through **righteousness** unto eternal life by Yahshua the Messiah our Sovereign,” Ro. 5:21.

The law is of righteousness, “But Israel, which followed after **the law of righteousness**, hath not attained to **the law of righteousness**,” Ro. 9:31 and “Concerning zeal, persecuting the assembly; touching the **righteousness which is in the law**, blameless,” Phil. 3:6.

“But thou, O man of Yahweh, flee these things; and **follow after righteousness**, piety, faith, love patience, meekness,” 1 Tim. 6:11.

“For we through the Spirit wait for **the hope of righteousness** by faith,” Gal. 5:5.

“In the transgression of an evil man there is a snare: but **the righteous** doth sing and rejoice,” Prov. 29:6.

The righteous considers the cause of the poor, “**The righteous** considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it,” Prov. 29:7.

OVERCOMING THE DEVIL’S TACTICS

Now, the devil and his ministers would try to put down righteousness of course, show an easier road to follow, give an excuse to not be perfect in righteousness, try to convince it is alright to go the easier way, which is the way of death. The wages of sin is death, Ro. 6:23, first part. The soul who sins shall die (Ez. 18:20. For example, the devil might say you can’t be perfect. Only one in a fleshly body lived a perfect life here on earth; so why try to do so? Don’t knock yourself out trying. Your works don’t save you. The advocate is still there. Don’t worry about a little sin now and then.

As to the devil’s ministers saying, you can’t keep the commandments – it’s true, they can’t. Why? Because a person needs Yahweh’s Spirit in him to do so. Yahweh gives His Spirit to them that obey Him (Acts 5:32). If one teaches we cannot obey, and doesn’t attempt to, how can he receive Yahweh’s Spirit? We need a heart/mind to obey Yahweh’s laws, “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Yahweh; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them an Elohim, and they shall be to Me a People,” Heb. 8:10... “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith Yahweh; I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more,” Heb. 10:16-17. We get that mind by His Spirit being in us.

We are in a fleshly body as Yahshua was here on earth; however you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed, the Spirit of the Mighty One dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of the Messiah, he does not belong to Him (Ro. 8:9).

“*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in the Messiah Yahshua, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in the Messiah Yahshua hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, Yahweh sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against Yahweh: for it is not subject to the law of Yahweh, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please Yahweh. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of Yahweh dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of the Messiah, he is none of his...For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live,” Ro. 8:1-9, 13.

We are to walk after the spirit – not the flesh (v. 1 KJV). We are to mind the things of the Spirit (v. 5). The mind of the flesh (v. 7), which we should not have (v. 1), is not able to be subject to the Mighty One’s law (v. 7). Those in the flesh, which we should not be (v. 1), cannot please the Mighty One (v. 8). But you are not in the flesh (v. 9), but in the Spirit (v. 1). Thus you are able to be subject to the law of the Mighty One (v. 7). For if you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live (v. 13).

The Word shows the beauty and benefit of righteousness. The adversary, misusing Isa. 64:6, might say, All your righteousness is just filthy rags. So don’t try to be so right as to keep all the commandments, never sinning, being perfect in everything, and certainly not going so far as to removing some words of pagan/heathen connection from your vocabulary. You can’t eliminate them all; so why eliminate any? Don’t be so fussy. It’s too hard to be righteous.

UNDERSTANDING ISA. 64:6



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Would Yahweh show us throughout His Word to be righteous if it was just as filthy rags? Let's think on Isa. 64:6 and context a little bit and not the condition of the people whose righteousness was like a polluted rag, "O Yahweh, why hast Thou made us to err from Thy ways, and hardened our heart from Thy fear? Return for Thy servants' sake, the tribes of Thine inheritance. The People of Thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down Thy sanctuary. We are Thine: Thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by Thy name. O that Thou woudest rend the heavens, that Thou woudest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make Thy name known to Thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things *which* we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For since the beginning of the world *men* have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O Mighty One, beside thee, *what* he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, *those that* remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in thine is continuance, and we shall be saved. But we are all as an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And *there is* none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities," Isa. 63:17-19, 64:1-7.

They had wandered from Yahweh's way and their hearts were hardened so as not to fear Him. They had become as when they were not called by Yahweh's Name. They sinned and became as unclean. They had fallen like leaves for their iniquities so that the wind would sweep them away. None invoked Yahweh's Name, or remembered to lay hold on Him. Yahweh had turned away His face from them, and delivered them up for their sins. In this condition, all their righteousness was like a polluted rag.

But we, having repented and received Yahweh's Spirit, in faith, calling on His Name, keeping His commandments, should not be disheartened by the adversary to think our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Similarly as we read in chapter one of Isaiah, in sabbaths, new moons, and great day, sinful people make offerings in vain; but on becoming clean, it's a different thing.

Contrary to most other versions I have checked,

the King James version is misleading at Isa. 64:6 where it reads, "we are." Eight other versions indicate, "we have become". Having become as unclean is why the righteousnesses are unacceptable, and are as filthy rags.

We're instructed to keep the commandments, sin not, be perfect, and be righteous. The righteousnesses of those not living this way are as filthy rags in Yahweh's sight. The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of the Mighty One (1 Cor. 6:9). The righteousnesses of a repentant, obedient one, are pleasing and acceptable to Yahweh, "Do good in Thy good pleasure unto Zion: build Thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt Thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar," Psa. 51:18-19.

"The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and upon the iniquitous shall be his iniquity. But if the unrighteous man will turn from all the unrighteous acts which he has done, and will keep all my commandments, and practice righteousness and mercy, he shall surely live and not die. None of the transgressions which he committed shall be remembered; for the righteousness which he has exercised, he shall live. Can I, says Yahweh, so much desire the death of the unrighteous, as I do that he should turn from his evil way and live?" Ez. 18:20-23.

Should we pursue righteousness? The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments reveal that we should. There are tremendous benefits that come from pursuing righteousness as has been shown. Have you been deceived to forsake the pursuit of righteousness? It is our admonishment that you repent and begin your pursuit of righteousness with the help of our Heavenly Father Yahweh and His Beloved Son Yahshua the Messiah. You will be greatly rewarded for doing so.



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ADDITIONAL READING

IS THE LAW DONE AWAY?

A MOST DEADLY SIN

IS THE LAW WRITTEN IN YOUR HEART?

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