

The Righteousness of God

Matthew 5:17-20: *“¹⁷ Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. ¹⁸ For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. ¹⁹ Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*

- I. Verse 17—*“Think not...come...destroy the law”*
 - A. The Lord turns to give a warning; this is a warning about what to think about what He is teaching as He now said in **Matthew 5:17**.
 1. The verse says, *“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”*
 - B. The Lord is about to embark on teaching what the people had never heard before.
 - C. Their teachers of the law (or Torah) and the prophets had never told them what He is about to tell them.
 - D. Because of that, the people who were listening to him would be tempted to think that the Lord is destroying the law and the prophets.
 - E. He knew that the people would think that he is introducing a new way to God that is not in the Torah and the prophets.
 - F. He knew that the Rabbis were going to accuse the Lord of destroying the Torah law and the prophets.
 - G. This was very important to the Lord that this wrong thinking that He had come to destroy the law and prophets be cut off from the start.
 - H. He was about to start a trend of teaching that started with, “You have heard that, but I say unto you.”
 1. What the people had heard in the past was the interpretation of the law and the prophets from the point of view of the Rabbis. He was going to give them the correct interpretation of the law and prophets—not a destruction of the law and prophets.
 - I. Here the Lord was preaching to people who **only knew** the Old Testament, and they were tempted to think that the Lord Jesus had come to destroy the Old Testament.
 - J. Today, it’s the opposite. People in the Lord’s day **only knew** the Old Testament, whereas, the church today only knows the New Testament as relevant in their lives
 1. Some churches even call themselves a “New Testament Church.”
 - K. The church today sees the Old Testament as archaic and Jewish. Just as the people in the Lord’s day who only knew the Old Testament was wrong to think that the Lord came to destroy the Old Testament, the church today who only knows the New Testament is wrong to think that the Lord came to destroy the Old Testament.
 - L. The reason for wrong thinking in the Lord’s day and wrong thinking today is that people do not really understand the Old Testament.
 1. The Old Testament provides an explanation of the New Testament through examples and types and symbols.
 2. The New Testament reveals the meaning of the Old Testament.
 3. You cannot know the Old Testament without the New Testament, and you cannot know the New Testament without the Old Testament.
 4. The Old Testament is the foundation that the New Testament stands on.

- a. If you take away the foundation, then the building collapses.
- 5. The New Testament is the building that the Old Testament stands on.
 - a. If you take away the building, then the foundation has no purpose.
- 6. That is what it is like to only know the Old Testament without knowing the New Testament; it is an unfinished wall with only the foundation.
- 7. It is like the foundation is crying out, “Where is my wall? I am all set up to be the foundation of a wall. Where is my wall?”
- 8. That is what the Old Testament is without the New Testament; it is crying out for the New Testament explanation of all the feasts and ordinances and laws. It is crying out for the New Testament to explain why.
- M. Those who try only to follow the Old Testament try to keep hundreds of laws without knowledge of what they all mean.
- N. When you only focus on the Old Testament, you are concerned with “What.” But, when you focus on the New Testament, then you look at the Old Testament and are concerned with “Why.”
- O. When you only focus on the Old Testament without the New Testament, you don’t ask “Why?” You just do it.
- P. On the other hand, if you only focus on the New Testament without seeing the Old Testament as the explanation for the New Testament, then, the interpretation of the meaning of the New Testament has no guide and is prone to deception.
 - 1. People who do not see the Old Testament as the explanation of the New Testament are prone to be misled.
 - 2. For example, people who see the Old Testament as “Old” and not relevant for today do not see that the Jewish people are God’s people. They see that in the Old Testament, and they see that in the New Testament that God has replaced the Jewish people with the church as God’s people.
 - 3. That is one example of how not seeing the importance of the Old Testament to explain the New Testament.
- Q. The **Lord’s warning** is so important in verse 17.
 - 1. **Matthew 5:17** says, “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets.*”
- R. This is such a serious problem that the Lord took a strong stand against thinking that He came to **destroy the Old Testament**.
- S. The Lord was saying in verse 17, “Perish the thought” or as Paul protested at the thought that God has rejected the Jewish people in **Romans 11:1**.
 - 1. **Romans 11:1** states, “*I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.*”
- T. When the Lord Jesus said, “Think not,” He was protesting at the thought of **canceling out or weakening** the Old Testament which is why we spent 7 years in the Book of Genesis.
- U. He uses a very strong word when He said, “Destroy.” The devil came to destroy in the following verses:
 - 1. **John 10:10**—“*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*”
 - 2. **Luke 9:56**—“*For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*”
- V. The Lord did not come to destroy men, but He did come to destroy as stated in the following verses:

1. **1 John 3:8**—“*He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*”
 2. **Hebrews 2:14**—“*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;*”
 3. The Lord came to destroy the devil and the works of the devil.
- W. He knows what the scribes and Pharisees are going to say about Him in **Matthew 15:1-2**.
1. **Matthew 15:1-2** writes, “*Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,¹ Why do **thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders?** for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.²”*
 2. The Rabbis teach that the traditions of the elders are the correct interpretation of the Torah law and prophets.
 3. So, the Rabbis taught that to violate the traditions of the elders is to destroy the Torah law and the prophets.
- X. He knew He was going to be accused of destroying the traditions of the elders and the laws of Moses.
1. He knew that it would be tempting for His disciples to think that He came to destroy the law because that is what would be said about Him.
 2. He warns them to now allow their minds to “think not that I am come to destroy the law.”

II. Verse 17—“*I am come...to fulfill*”

- A. The Lord Jesus has stated that He did not come to destroy the Torah law or the prophets. Then, He went on to state what He did come to do. That was found in verse 17.
 1. **Matthew 5:17** says, “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*”
- B. The Greek word used here for “fulfil” is the word “Pleeroo.” It is an interesting word because it means “to complete” or “to finish.” This is the word that is used to speak about when what is prophesied to happen actually happens. We have already seen this word used for prophesy 5 times in Matthew.
 1. **Matthew 1:22**—“*Now all this was **done, that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,*”
 2. **Matthew 2:15**—“*And was there until the death of Herod: **that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.”*
 3. **Matthew 2:17**—“*Then **was fulfilled** that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,*”
 4. **Matthew 2:23**—“*And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: **that it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.”*
 5. **Matthew 4:14**—“***That it might be fulfilled** which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying.”*
- C. When He said in verse 17 that He came to fulfill, He meant that the Old Testament was full of prophecies that He would fulfill.
- D. Each prophecy in the Old Testament is a promise from God. Every prophecy is God saying, “I promise you this will be fulfilled in the future.” The Old Testament is full of those promised prophecies.

- E. What the Lord meant in verse 17 was that He did not come to destroy the Old Testament with all those prophecies as if to say, “God is not going to keep those promises.” He was saying that He had come to fulfill those promised prophecies.
- F. He did not come to make void God’s promises. He came to make good God’s promises.
- G. The prophets prophesied which means that they told what was going to happen in the future. They said what God promised would happen.
 - 1. The Lord came to fulfill those promised prophecies from the prophets.
- H. The law served two purposes. One purpose was to show man just how far short he had come to the mark.
 - 1. Man looked at the law and looked at his life and said, “I just can’t do it.” But, the law also led man to **Galatians 3:24**.
 - a. **Galatians 3:24** says, *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*
- I. What the law did was to show man how sinful he was. It caused man to say, “There has got to be some person who is not like me and who can keep the law perfectly.”
- J. That caused man to look for that person. When the Lord Jesus said that He came to fulfill, He was saying, “I am that person you are looking for. I am the sinless person who will fulfill the law you could not fulfill because you are sinful.”
- K. By living the life that fulfilled the law, He lived the life that we could not live.
- L. In that sense, the law was like a promised prophesy from God where God said, “Thou shalt not, and I know you will do what thou shalt not because I know you are sinful. I promise you that One person will come who will obey the “Thou shalt not.”
 - 1. When the Lord Jesus said in verse 17 that He came to fulfill, He was saying that He was that person who fulfilled God’s promise that there would be a person who God called “my righteous servant” in **Isaiah 53:11**.
 - 2. He is the only person who ever obeyed every aspect of the law. He gave the law. He defined the law. He was the only One who perfectly obeyed the law as a man.
- M. If we think of the Old Testament as shadows, then the Lord Jesus proved that He was the unseen One who cast the shadows that make up the Old Testament.
 - 1. The Old Testament described the Lord Jesus by examples, but when the Lord Jesus came, the examples gave way to the real person they were describing. The examples were not destroyed; they still serve to describe the Lord Jesus.
 - a. **Hebrews 9:8-12** says, *“The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:⁸ Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;⁹ Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.¹⁰ But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;¹¹ Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.¹²”*
 - 2. The Greek word, “reformation” does not mean the destruction of the Old Testament. The Greek word is Diorthosis, where Dia means “go through” and Orthosis means “straight.” When the Lord Jesus came, we go straight to the person that the Old Testament is describing, but we still have the value of the Old Testament as the explanation of who the Lord Jesus is.

3. For example, the whole point of the dietary laws of not eating “pork” was only to use “pork” as an example of the world. To not eat pork was just to show how the Lord Jesus was separate from the world.
 4. There is nothing wrong or sinful about eating pork today, but, we still love to read how those in the Old Testament times could not eat pork. They were looking for the One who would be separate from the world.
 5. Today, we eat pork, but we love to read how pork was forbidden as a teaching tool of how the Lord Jesus would be separate from the world. Now, that He has come, we don’t see Him by ourselves not eating pork. We look at Him as *diorthosis*.
When we open the New Testament, we go straight to Him.
- N. The word “fulfilled” is the word “achieved” or “accomplished.” It views the Old Testament as a series of promises, and all of the Old Testament is one grand prophecy about the Lord Jesus as He said in **John 5:39**.
1. **John 5:39** says, *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.”*
- O. The word “fulfill” was very important in His life. He was consciously aware that He was fulfilling a prophecy in His life.
1. **Luke 4:16-21** reads, *“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.¹⁶ And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,¹⁷ The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,¹⁸ To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.¹⁹ And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.²⁰ And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.²¹”*
- P. He knew He was fulfilling or accomplishing Scripture when He read that portion.
- Q. The greatest fulfillment or accomplishment of prophecy came when He accomplished God’s redemption promise on the cross. He cried out “accomplished” or “finished” when He died in **John 19:30**.
1. **John 19:30** says, *“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”*
- R. At the start of His ministry in verse 17, He said that He came to fulfill or accomplish. At the end of His ministry, when He died, His last words were “accomplished” or “fulfilled.”
- III. Verse 18—*“One jot or one tittle...no wise pass”*
- A. Then, just to make very clear what he was saying about the law being a prophecy of Himself and how He was going to fulfill all of the demands of the Law, He said in **Matthew 5:18**.
1. The verse says, *“For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”*
 2. The word “jot” is the Hebrew word, “Yod.” It is like half of a quotation mark “ ’ ”
 3. A tittle is smaller than a Yod, it is a little extension of a stroke that is used at the top of the Resh. That makes a little extension that turns the Resh into a Daleth or that turns the Hebrew letter “**R**” into the Hebrew letter “**D**.”
- IV. Verse 19—*“Break one...and shall teach men so”*
- A. Then to further emphasize the warning, He proceeded to not only warn against breaking any of the commandments, but He especially warned against teaching others to break the commandments when He said in **Matthew 5:19**.

1. **Matthew 5:19** says, “Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”
 - B. Now, He is extending His warning to the teachers of the people when He said, “**Shall teach men so.**”
 - C. Now, this is getting to the Pharisees.
- V. Verse 20—“*I say unto you*”
- A. Now, He moves further into taking a shot at the scribes and Pharisees when He said in **Matthew 5:20**.
 1. **Matthew 5:20** says, “*For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*”
 - B. When He said, “**I say unto you,**” He was starting to use a phrase that He will use more and more to set Himself apart from the Pharisees,
 - C. By saying, “I say unto you,” He is saying, “I am not part of the Pharisee system or the religious system that has the power in Jerusalem.”
 - D. He knew that the religious system was going to condemn Him to death and the fight was on for the souls of men.
- VI. **Ezekiel 34**—Prophesy against the shepherds
- A. Ezekiel 34:1-12 says the following: “*And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,¹ Son of man, prophesy **against the shepherds of Israel**, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; **Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves!** should not the shepherds **feed the flocks?**² **Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.**³ *The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but **with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.***⁴ *And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.*⁵ **My sheep wandered** through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: *yea, **my flock was scattered** upon all the face of the earth, and **none did search or seek after them.***⁶ *Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;*⁷ *As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because **my flock** became a prey, and **my flock** became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but **the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;***⁸ *Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD;*⁹ *Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **I am against the shepherds;** and I will require **my flock** at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for **I will deliver my flock from their mouth,** that they may not be meat for them.¹⁰ *For thus saith the Lord GOD; **Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.***¹¹ *As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.*¹²”**
 - B. **Ezekiel 34:15-16** says, “*I will feed **my flock**, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.*¹⁵ **I will seek that which was lost,** and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.¹⁶”

- C. **Ezekiel 34:30-31** says, *“Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even **the house of Israel, are my people**, saith the Lord GOD.³⁰ And **ye my flock**, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.³¹”*
- D. **Ezekiel 34:22** says, *“Therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey.”*
- E. People oftentimes ask the question, “Why was the Lord Jesus crucified? Why was He killed?”
1. The way to understand why the Lord Jesus was crucified is to understand Ezekiel 34.
 2. He was killed in the great fight that is described in **Ezekiel 34**.
- F. With these words, “I say unto you,” the fight is on. This is the start of the fulfillment of the prophecy in Ezekiel 34 which is a declaration of war.
1. **Ezekiel 34:2**—*“Against the shepherds of Israel.”*
 2. **Ezekiel 34:2**—*“Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves!”*
 3. **Ezekiel 34:10**—*“Behold, I am against the shepherds.”*
- G. The fight prophesied in **Ezekiel 34** is over the Jewish people.
- H. Over and over again throughout **Ezekiel 34**, the Lord Jesus states ownership or possession of the Jewish people.
1. **Ezekiel 34:6**—*“My sheep wandered”*
 2. **Ezekiel 34:8**—*“My flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast”*
 3. **Ezekiel 34:8**—*“The shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock”*
 4. **Ezekiel 34:10**—*“I will deliver my flock from their mouth”*
 5. **Ezekiel 34:11**—*“Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out”*
 6. **Ezekiel 34:12**—*“So will I seek out my sheep”*
 7. **Ezekiel 34:15**—*“I will feed my flock”*
 8. **Ezekiel 34:30**—*“The house of Israel are my people”*
 9. **Ezekiel 34:31**—*“Ye my flock, the flock of my pasture are men”*
 10. **Ezekiel 34:22**—*“I will save my flock”*
- I. There is so much **ownership of the Jewish people as His sheep** and His flock that have been scattered by the shepherds and starved by the shepherds and not cared for by the shepherds.
- J. He is **going to recover His sheep** from the bad shepherds.
- K. When Jehovah Jesus said in **Ezekiel 34:16**, *“I will seek that which was lost,”* He was stating the reason He came to earth as He said in **Luke 19:10**.
1. **Luke 19:10** says, *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*
- L. The bad shepherds are not going to give up the sheep easily. There will be a fight, and that is what we are seeing here in **Matthew 5**.
1. **Matthew 5** is the voice of the true shepherd to His sheep
 2. **Matthew 5** is the jealous voice of the shepherd to recover His sheep.
 - a. He must start to show His sheep how they have been misled by the false shepherds. He does this with the words, “I say unto you” which has the meaning of “They say unto you, but I say unto you.”
- M. When Jehovah Jesus said in **Ezekiel 34:11**, *“Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out,”* this was Jehovah Jesus saying, “Look, it is me! It is Jesus that has come to search out and find my sheep. It is really me!

1. That meant that He would not give the job of recovering His sheep to an angel or angels, but that He Himself as Jehovah Jesus was going to search and find and start to save them as He said in verse 22.

- a. **Ezekiel 34:22** says, *“Therefore will I save my flock.”*

- N. This is the Lord God Himself that is the God of Israel who has come in human form as Jesus of Nazareth on this Mount of the Sermon. He will save His flock, the Jewish people, and it might take thousands of years, but He will save Israel from the mouth of the bad shepherds.
- O. As a matter of fact, all of the Gospels should be read with Ezekiel 34 in mind—the great battle of God for His people.

VII. Verse 20—*“Exceed the righteousness”*

- A. This was unbelievable for them to hear in verse 20 that their righteousness had to exceed the scribes and Pharisees who were viewed as at the highest level of keeping the law. The Lord is saying that they had to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees in order to enter Heaven.
- B. He had said about righteousness in **Matthew 5:10**, *“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”*
- C. Now, He is saying in **Matthew 5:20**, *“Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*
- D. Clearly, He is talking about two different righteousnesses.
 1. In verse 20, He has called one righteousness “the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.”
 2. In verse 20, He is referring to another righteousness which He calls, “your righteousness.” This will result in persecution in verse 10.
- E. So, what is the difference between these two righteousnesses?
 1. The righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees is a righteousness based on obeying the traditions of the elders which was all outward and said nothing about the heart being right with God.
 2. It is a righteousness that is based on the traditions of the elders and not the pure Word of God; it is based on the interpretation of the elders.
 3. The righteousness of the scribes and elders is the righteousness that Israel is referring to in **Isaiah 64:6**
 - a. **Isaiah 64:6** says, *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness’s are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”*
 - b. This is Israel saying to themselves, “We obeyed the righteousness of the elders, we kept the Sabbath, and we did not eat pork or cheeseburgers. All our righteousness is as filthy rags.” It is not true righteousness.
- F. Their own righteousness is the righteousness that they worked to establish referred to in **Romans 10:3**.
 1. **Romans 10:3** says, *“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”*
- G. That is their own righteousness, not God’s righteousness that they were working to establish.
 1. **Isaiah 57:12**—*“I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.”*
 2. **Titus 3:5**—*“Not by works of righteousness.”*
- H. Their righteousness is **linked to their works**.

- I. Whereas, the other righteousness called God's righteousness is very different from man's righteousness. Man's righteousness is based on works, whereas God's righteousness is based on **Romans 4:6-8**.
1. **Romans 4:6-8** says, "*Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom **God imputeth righteousness without works**,⁶ Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are **forgiven**, and whose **sins are covered**.⁷ Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*⁸"
 2. God's righteousness is **without works**.
 3. God's righteousness is based on God's **forgiveness** and on God **covering sins that make man unrighteous**.
 4. God's righteousness is not based on man's works. God's righteousness is based on **believing in the Lord Jesus Christ** as Savior and Lord; this is where a person is made righteous by being in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - a. **2 Corinthians 5:21**—"*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be **made the righteousness of God in him**.*"
 - b. **1 Corinthians 1:30**—"*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is **made unto us...righteousness**.*"
 - c. **Romans 5:19**—"*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by **the obedience of one shall many be made righteous**.*"
 5. God's righteousness is not based on a man making himself righteous before God. God's righteousness is based on God making a man righteous.
- J. This is a righteousness that is **not our own righteousness**.
- K. God uses a special word to describe how He makes a man righteous, and it is the word, "imputed."
1. That was the word God used to describe how He made Abraham righteous. It is an Abrahamic righteousness of God's righteousness that is made to be on Abraham's account.
 - a. **Genesis 15:6** says, "*And he believed in the LORD; and **he counted it to him for righteousness**.*"
- L. This is not Abraham's righteousness where the Bible is quick to point out to us Abraham's sins with having a baby with Hagar who was not his wife and lying twice about Sarah not being his wife, but this is a righteousness that is not our own.
1. **Philippians 3:9** states, "*And be found in him, **not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith**.*"
- M. Abraham was not righteous in himself, but Abraham was counted as righteous because it was the righteousness of Jehovah Jesus that was made to count for Abraham to be righteous.
1. **Isaiah 54:17** reads, "*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and **every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn**. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and **their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD**.*"
 2. How could every tongue that is raised against Israel that called out their sins be condemned?
 - a. **Isaiah 54:17** says, "*Their righteousness is of me.*"
 3. The righteousness for Israel is God's righteousness counted for them, and this will be what happens when Israel is saved.

- a. **Jeremiah 33:16** states, *“In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called.”*
- N. This is a righteousness that is **not based on our works**, but this **righteousness is based on justification**. **Isaiah 53** talks all about the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ and the only reference to us is in **Isaiah 53:6**.
1. **Isaiah 53:6** says, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”*
 2. All the rest of **Isaiah 53** is about His suffering and the end result of His suffering and death for us is found in **Isaiah 53:11**.
 - a. The verse says, *“Shall **my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.**”*
 3. What makes **Isaiah 53** so wonderful is that the chapter is **all about what the Lord Jesus Christ did** for us. The only reference to us in **Isaiah 53** is how we are sinners and how **we are healed and justified** by Him having **our sins loaded on Him** and Him being **wounded** for our transgressions and Him being **bruised** for our iniquities.
- O. This is a righteousness that is a free gift that is the righteousness that comes from **justification**.
1. **Romans 5:18**—*“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”*
- P. So, it is very easy to get **discouraged** when we look at **Matthew 5:20** which says, *“For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”*
- Q. It is very easy to look at verse 20 and say, “Your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? I don’t think so. When it comes to ‘my righteousness,’ I never made it to first base. I struck out at the plate.”
1. It is so important to see that verse 20 is not talking about “our own personal righteousness, but the righteousness of the Lord Jesus that counts as our righteousness when we believe in Jesus.”