

SOJOURNERS IN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

The book of Isaiah, which IS the Word of God given to Isaiah the prophet, has in **chapter 1**, God telling His people what is "true religion". The term for that is orthopraxy. "Ortho" meaning "right, correct, or straight". "Praxy" means practice. As the saying goes, "practice makes perfect", the more we "practice righteousness", doing what is right before God, it becomes us, or really, the Righteousness of Christ becomes us. Our beloved Scripture from **John 1:12-13**, tells us, "But as many as received Him [Christ Jesus], to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." As children of God, those who have believed on Christ and have received Him, we are then to be practicing righteousness and not evil. The Apostle John tells us that saying, "If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him." (**1 John 2:29**) The law itself is, in the words of the Apostle Paul, "not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites [arsenokoites], for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God." (**1 Timothy 1:9-11**) As children of God, we are led by the Holy Spirit of God to bear the fruit of the Spirit, "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (**Gal. 5:22-23**) At the present, we are sojourners (this is just our temporary residence) in righteousness, that is, in uprightness, through the Righteousness we have in Christ Jesus. As we read in **Isaiah 25** last week, of what is still to come. "And He will destroy on this mountain [Mount Zion] the surface of the covering cast over all people [this darkness that surrounds us, no more thlipsis-pressing down on His people], and the veil that is spread over all nations. [We have the primary revelation of Christ Jesus and that we are being called to believe on Jesus as being the Christ and to receive Him, and that He is leading us out of the darkness and into His marvelous light but there is still much that is hidden from us] He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; **for the Lord has spoken.**"

Chapter 1 of Isaiah begins, after the opening address, by saying, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! For the Lord has spoken: "I have nourished and brought up children, **and they have rebelled against Me**; the ox knows its owner and the donkey its master's crib; but Israel does not know, My people do not consider." (**Isaiah 1:2-3**) God goes on to say, through Isaiah the prophet, "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. **Cease to do evil, learn to do good** [sound familiar?]; seek

justice, rebuke the oppressor; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. **If you are willing and obedient...**" (**Isaiah 1:16-19a**) What God was telling them is essentially the same thing that we find in the New Covenant through Christ Jesus. The Apostle Peter, addressing a crowd at the gate of the temple said, "**Repent** therefore and **be converted**, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come **from the presence of the Lord**, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things [Meaning God is still presently building His eternal kingdom, getting us all into the unity of the faith in Christ Jesus. Jesus will return as, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." (**2 Peter 3:9**)], which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." Repent being the Greek word "metanoeo" to where one has a change of mind, recognizing a need for change and then heeding to that need for change. As Peter stated, "repent AND be converted" is similar in nature to what God was speaking through Isaiah, for His people to stop practicing evil and then followed up with "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient..." The Apostle Peter said as much in **Acts 5:32** saying, "And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him." Righteousness, which basically means "being and doing right, is indeed our calling by Christ Jesus, to "practice righteousness" but is only imputed to the believer when he/she accepts Christ as his/her Savior".¹ That is where we are told by Jesus to "**seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.**" (**Matthew 6:33**)

That is then to say that we are not "saved" by our works. But, that New Covenant we have with God through Christ Jesus, is us recognizing a need for change, that is, we need His Righteousness, and then we are expected, as children of God, to then walk in it. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:8-10**) We've gone over most of Jesus' teachings this past summer. Jesus, after being falsely and illegally accused, tried, and convicted of blasphemy, for saying He was equal with God, that He was the Son of God, was then crucified on a cross. He then died on that cross, and was then placed in a tomb. He then rose from the dead on the third day, conquering death, sin, and evil, and making it possible for us

1 New Unger's Bible Dictionary

too, to also overcome the sting of death and have eternal life in Christ Jesus. Then, He spoke to His disciples these words, which we now call "The Great Commission", "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you [of which we can read in Matthew-Revelation]; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

Jesus dying on a cross for our sins does not mean God gives us a free license to sin. God still hates sin. Obedience is expected of us as children of God. Jesus said as much saying, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." (Matthew 7:21) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:23) What is lawlessness? The Apostle John tells us, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3:4) An example of God's hatred of sin is also found in Proverbs 6:16-19, "These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that are swift in running to evil, a false witness who speaks lies, and one who sows discord among brethren." To expand further on that a bit, as we looked at this passage last week in Revelation 21, where we are told that there will be a new heaven and a new earth and a New Jerusalem. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, ["for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple"-Rev. 21:22] and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. Then He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." And He said to me, "Write, for these words are true and faithful. And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters [an explanation of idolatry is this, "An idol is anything that replaces the one, true God. Idolatry extends beyond the worship of idols and images and false gods. Even for those who do not bow physically before a statue, idolatry is a matter of the heart—pride, self-centeredness, greed, gluttony, a love for possessions and ultimately rebellion against God.²] and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." (Revelation 21:1-8) As we find, we are not living our lives, as children of God, according to the ceremonial or tribal laws that God gave to Moses for the Israelites. We're not stoning

2 <https://www.gotquestions.org/idolatry-definition.html>

people or doing sacrifices of animals. We are though called to obedience through the leading of the Holy Spirit according to the Word of God, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has 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, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to 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 God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His." (Romans 8:1-9)

Last week we went over **Isaiah 25**. It starts with a praise to God, "O Lord [YHWH-Yehovah], You are my God [Elohiym]. I will exalt You, I will praise Your name [yadah-with one's hands, not just with the lips], for You have done wonderful things." (Isaiah 25:1a) Then it says, "Your counsels of old are **faithfulness and truth.**" (Isaiah 25:1b) **Isaiah 25:6-8** says, "And in this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of choice piecess [shemen-fatness of the land], a feast of wines on the lees [side of a hill], of fat things full of marrow, of well-refined wines on the lees. And He will destroy on this mountain the surface of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. [no more thlipsis-pressing down on His people] He will swallow up death forever, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces; the rebuke of His people He will take away from all the earth; **for the Lord has spoken.**" **Isaiah 25:9-12** And it will be said in that day: "**Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.**" For on this mountain the hand of the Lord will rest, and Moab shall be trampled down under Him, as straw is trampled down for the refuse heap. And He will spread out His hands in their midst as a swimmer reaches out to swim, and He will bring down their pride together with the trickery of their hands. The fortress of the high fort of your walls He will bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, down to the dust."

Now, for **Isaiah 26**, we have **A Song of Salvation:**

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In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

"We have a strong city; God will appoint salvation for walls and

bulwarks. Open the gates, that the righteous nation which **keeps the truth** [Jesus said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."-**John 14:6**] may enter in. You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. Trust in the Lord forever, for in Yah, the Lord, is everlasting strength. For He brings down those who dwell on high, the lofty city; He lays it low, He lays it low to the ground, He brings it down to the dust. The foot shall tread it down—the feet of the poor and the steps of the needy." The way of the just is uprightness ["the just shall live by faith" (**Rom. 1:17**) in His Righteousness!]; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just. Yes, in the way of Your judgments, O Lord, **we have waited for You**; the desire of our soul is for Your name and for the remembrance of You. With my soul I have desired You in the night, yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early; for when Your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will **learn righteousness**.

Let grace be shown to the wicked, yet he will not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when Your hand is lifted up, they will not see. But they will see and be ashamed for their envy of people; yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them. Lord, **You will establish peace for us, for You have also done all our works in us**. O Lord our God, masters besides You have had dominion over us; but by You only we make mention of Your name. They are dead, they will not live; they are deceased, they will not rise. Therefore You have punished and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish. You have increased the nation, O Lord, You have increased the nation; You are glorified; You have expanded all the borders of the land. **Lord, in trouble they have visited You, they poured out a prayer when Your chastening was upon them**. As a woman with child is in pain and cries out in her pangs, when she draws near the time of her delivery, so have we been in Your sight, O Lord. We have been with child, we have been in pain; we have, as it were, brought forth wind; we have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth, nor have the inhabitants of the world fallen. Your dead shall live; together with my dead body they shall arise. Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust; for your dew is like the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Take Refuge from the Coming Judgment

Come, my people, enter your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; Hide yourself, as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation is past. For behold, the Lord comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity; the earth will also disclose her blood, and will no more cover her slain.

As long as we are still here, we are just sojourners in His Righteousness, sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus, until God, our Heavenly Father says, "It is done!"