

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

THE RIGHTEOUS MAN *A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES* *PART SIXTY THREE OF SIXTY FOUR*

James describes one whose prayers are powerful as "a righteous man" (James 5:16). There must be some who fit that description for he uses Elijah as an example. Yet we also read, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). How can we harmonize these two statements? The statement in Romans is simply telling us that all people sin. "For there is no man that sinneth not" (I Kings 8:46). The "righteous man" must be one who is forgiven of his sins and living his life "walking in the light." "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). The righteous man is thus one who endeavors to please God in life as opposed to those who do not obey God.

Before one can even begin to walk in the light he must desire to be righteous. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mt. 5:6). No one becomes righteous without a strong desire for it. What creates such a desire? Faith in Christ and a consciousness of our personal sins which alienate us from God (Isa. 59:1,2). Jesus said, "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "Except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish" (Luke 13:3). We must believe that

Jesus is the One God promised to take away our sins. "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness" (Rom. 10:10). Sincere faith in Christ leads to obedience to His requirements which are succinctly stated by Peter, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins" (Acts 2:38).

From baptism one rises to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3,4). The righteous have a different life style, a "newness of life." There is an obvious difference between the righteous and the evil. "For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears unto their supplication: but the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil" (I Peter 3:12). Righteousness is defined for us in the description of the parents of John the Baptist. "And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless" (Luke 1:6).

You cannot be righteous by living perfectly for you have already sinned. If you have not been forgiven, you need to accept His way. His grace has made forgiveness possible through faith and obedience. Your only hope is Christ. Peter gave the answer, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation" (Acts 2:40).

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