

## **“Jehovah Tsidkenu: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”**

Have you ever wondered how the Holy God of the Bible could make a guilty, defiled, hell-deserving sinner righteous(HOLY)? The Scriptures are quite clear that PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS (HOLINESS) is the requirement for any sinner's entrance into God's presence. Christ said: "For I say unto you, that except YOUR righteousness EXCEED the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."(Matt.7:20) We learn several lessons from Christ's words in this verse. First of all, this righteousness required by God to bring us into His presence has to be legally MINE-"Except YOUR RIGHTEOUSNESS". But the Scriptures tell us that "all OUR RIGHTEOUSNESSES are as filthy rags."(Isa.64:6) Paul said: "There is NONE RIGHTEOUS, no not one."(Rom.3:10) Secondly, our righteousness has to "exceed" the righteousness the scribes and Pharisees righteousness. What kind of righteousness did they have? They had a righteousness of their own creation, consisting of their obedience to God's law and their participation in the ceremonies and rituals of the Mosaic covenant. Their righteousness impressed other men. "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."(Lk.16:15) These men prayed, they gave tithes of all that they had, they attended synagogue regularly, and they obeyed every outward commandment. Yet our Lord tells us their righteousness is not the righteousness required to bring a sinner to heaven.

The question remains: Where do we find the righteousness God requires? This is what the grace of God is all about. In the person of Christ, God's grace and mercy provided what His holiness and justice demanded. His holiness demands that we keep His holy law perfectly in thought, word, and deed from the cradle to the grave. In other words, we have to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul, not just for our whole lives, BUT ETERNALLY. Also, God's justice demands we suffer the eternal punishment due unto our sin. "The soul that sinneth, IT SHALL DIE." If you break just one of God's laws, it demands that you suffer eternal condemnation, with no possibility of parole. This dear sinner is why Christ Jesus is called "The Lord OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS". Christ loved God with all His heart, mind, and soul from the cradle to the grave, and He suffered sinlessly for all the sins of all God's elect. He didn't do it as a private person, but as the representative and substitute of His people, and His finished work at Calvary (HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS) has become theirs legally in God's sight, just as much theirs as if they had performed it. The writer of Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan said it best: "And, indeed, this is one of the greatest mysteries in the world, namely, that a righteousness that resides with a person in heaven should justify me a sinner, on earth!"