

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

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OF THE
TRIUNE GOD

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Living Stream Ministry

Anaheim, CA • www.lsm.org

THE DISPENSATION OF THE TRIUNE GOD

It is very important that we get into the depths of the book of Romans and not read it in a superficial way. In this booklet we shall consider the matter of the dispensation of the Triune God according to His righteousness, through His holiness, and unto His glory. Here we have four important words: dispensation, righteousness, holiness, and glory. Paul does not use the word dispensation in Romans. Nevertheless, the fact of God's dispensation is implied throughout this book. Righteousness, holiness, and glory, on the contrary, are dealt with by Paul explicitly. God's dispensation is according to His righteousness; that is, it is based upon His righteousness. Furthermore, it is through His holiness. This means that His dispensation is processed through holiness. Finally, this dispensation is unto God's glory. It issues in the glory of God.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Many verses in Romans speak of God's righteousness. In [1:17](#) Paul says that the righteousness

of God is revealed in the gospel. In [3:21](#) he says that the righteousness of God has been manifested, and in [3:25 and 26](#) he speaks of the showing forth of the righteousness of God. In [5:17](#) Paul refers to the gift of righteousness and in [5:21](#) of grace reigning through righteousness. In [8:10](#) he says that our spirit is life because of righteousness.

These verses indicate that in the book of Romans righteousness is a footing, a standing, a base, for God's dispensation. The dispensation of the Triune God into us is according to God's righteousness. It is not according to the law nor according to virtue. It is uniquely according to the righteousness of God. [Psalm 89:14](#) says that righteousness and justice are the foundation of God's throne (ASV). God's throne is based upon His righteousness. Without righteousness, even God's throne would have no footing. Therefore, righteousness is crucial.

The entire universe rests upon God's righteousness. If suddenly there were no righteousness, the universe would collapse. Furthermore, the Bible reveals that God's kingdom is built upon righteousness ([Heb. 1:8](#)). Human government is also based on at least some measure of righteousness. For example, if there were no righteousness

in this country, the government would fall. In the same principle, if there were no righteousness in society or in our personal life, both society and our personal life would collapse. Righteousness is the supporting base upon which all things rest. The heavens, the earth, and everything in the universe are based upon God's righteousness.

In His economy the Triune God desires to dispense Himself into the three parts of man, into man's spirit, soul, and body. However, if God does not meet the requirements of His righteousness, He cannot carry out the dispensation of Himself into us. His dispensation must be according to His righteousness.

The Bible reveals that there is a relationship between God and man. In this relationship a number of transactions take place. These transactions must always be based upon righteousness. Therefore, for God's dispensation, the first basic requirement is God's righteousness.

THREE REQUIREMENTS

Three of the divine attributes—righteousness, holiness, and glory—place requirements upon us. Righteousness is versus sin. I believe that we all are aware of the requirement of God's

righteousness. But we may not be aware of the demands of God's holiness and glory; we may have no realization that glory is one of God's requirements. In [3:23](#) Paul points out that we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. This means that we have not fulfilled the requirement of God's glory.

[Genesis 3:24](#) indicates that as soon as man fell, he could not meet the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory. This verse says that God "placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." The sword signifies God's righteousness; the flame, God's holiness; and the cherubim, God's glory. The sword kills, the fire consumes, and the cherubim observe. Because man had fallen and had become sinful, the way to the tree of life was barred by God's righteousness, holiness, and glory. Praise the Lord that through Christ's redemption the requirements of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory have been fulfilled, and the way to the tree of life has been opened once again. In order for man to have a proper relationship with God, these three requirements had to be fulfilled.

THREE SECTIONS

God's righteousness, holiness, and glory form the basic structure of the book of Romans. Romans can be divided into several sections. After the introduction (1:1-17) and the section on condemnation (1:18—3:20), there are sections on justification (3:21—5:11), sanctification (5:12—8:13), and glorification (8:14-39). These sections are related respectively to God's righteousness, holiness, and glory. Therefore, these three divine attributes are related to the very structure of the book of Romans.

In which of these three sections are we today? The correct answer is that we are in the section of sanctification. We have passed through justification, but we are not yet in glorification. We all are destined to spend the whole of our Christian life on earth in the section on sanctification. I have been in this section for more than fifty years. Do not be disappointed by the length of time you must spend in this section. The time may seem long to you, but it is not to the Lord, with whom a thousand years are as one day (2 Pet. 3:8).

Although we are not yet in the section on glorification, we may nonetheless enjoy something

of glorification while we are in the section on sanctification. We may enjoy the foretaste or first-fruit of glorification. Sometimes when I am alone with the Lord, I experience a foretaste of the glorification to come. Every proper Christian should have experiences like this.

God's dispensation must be according to His righteousness. If Christ had not become a man with flesh and blood and if He had not died on the cross to take away our sins, it would have been impossible for God to dispense Himself into us. When some hear this, they may argue, "To say this is to be too legal and strict. Don't you know that God is love? He is not that strict and legal. Because God the Father loves me, He can simply come to me and dispense Himself to me, no matter how sinful I may be." Such a concept ignores the fact that God is a God of righteousness. As such a righteous One, He is more strict and more legal than any of us.

Yes, God is the Father, and He does love us. However, according to the parables in [Luke 15](#), we cannot come directly to the Father. The prodigal needs the shepherd (the Son) to seek him and to find him, and he needs the woman (the Spirit) to enlighten him so that he can wake up, repent, and decide to come home to the Father.

Only through the Son's seeking and finding and through the Spirit's enlightening can sinners return to the Father. Without the Son's redemption and the Spirit's enlightenment, we cannot come home to Him. Furthermore, if the Son had not died for us, the Father would not have the ground to receive us. However, because of the redemptive death of His Son, the Father has the ground to receive all who come to Him through Christ. This indicates that the Father's receiving of us must be according to His righteousness. Apart from the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ, there is no way for the righteous God to receive us and to impart Himself into us. If God were to dispense Himself into us without the requirement of His righteousness being fulfilled, He would place Himself in an unrighteous position. Therefore, the dispensation of the Triune God must be according to His righteousness.

God's righteousness required that we die because of our sin. However, if we had died, we would have perished. Because God does not want us to perish, He provided Christ as our substitute. Christ died on the cross for us according to God's righteousness to fulfill God's requirements. The purpose of Christ's death on the cross was not to enable us to go to heaven when we die; it

was to fulfill God's righteous requirements so that He could dispense Himself into us.

Suppose you would like to dispense juice into a glass, but you find that the glass is not clean. If you fill a dirty glass with juice, the juice will not be fit to drink. Hence, before dispensing the juice into the glass, you must first cleanse the glass. In like manner, before God could come into us, His Son became a man and died on the cross for us, shedding His blood to wash us from our sins. This enabled us to become cleansed vessels, ready to be filled with the Triune God. Before God could dispense Himself into us, we had to be washed in the blood of Christ. This is according to God's righteousness.

RIGHTEOUS BY DYING

We have pointed out that Christ died on the cross to fulfill God's righteous requirements. Now we must go on to see that God desires that we also go to the cross and die. If we are not crucified on the cross, God's righteous requirements cannot be fulfilled in us in a practical way. In the eyes of the righteous Father, nothing is more righteous than for us to die on the cross. If we die, we are righteous in every way. However, if we refuse to die, we have no righteousness in our

relationships with others and even with material things. We may treat people unfairly, and we may fail to handle our material possessions properly. Therefore, to be righteous before God, we not only need to be washed—we also need to die. When we die, we are spontaneously justified. A proper Christian is one who has died with Christ and who conducts himself daily according to this fact. If a believer lives in a natural way, he will be unrighteous. But if he experiences the death of the cross, he will be righteous in everything, with everyone, and in every way.

GOD DISPENSING HIMSELF

We have laid stress on the fact that God's righteousness requires the death both of Christ and of ourselves. We were involved in the death of Christ. When He died, we died also, for we died in Him. This all-inclusive death was for the fulfillment of God's righteous requirements. Because God's righteousness has been satisfied, God is justified in dispensing Himself into His redeemed and crucified people.

God cannot dispense Himself into persons still living in their natural life, but can only dispense Himself into those who have died. If you are still alive in a natural way, still living in sin

and in the world, God has no position to dispense Himself into you. Only the death of Christ and your death with Christ fulfills the requirement of His righteousness and gives God the ground righteously to impart Himself into you. This applies not only to the time we were saved but also to our daily experience with the Lord. If we want to experience the dispensation of the Triune God, we must take our standing before Him as crucified persons. We must believe and declare the fact of our death with Christ on the cross. Since we are then dead with Christ in a practical way, God will have the position to dispense Himself into us with all His riches. This is God's dispensation according to His righteousness.

HOLINESS AND RESURRECTION

In [6:19](#) Paul speaks of “righteousness unto sanctification.” This indicates that righteousness ushers us into holiness, into sanctification. The dispensation of the Triune God takes place through His holiness. God's holiness is related to the process of His dispensation. Just as the death of Christ is for righteousness, so the resurrection of Christ is for holiness. In fact, the resurrected Christ is the very element of holiness

within us. This holiness germinates us, generates us, and sanctifies us. This is wholly a matter of life.

[Romans 8:11](#) says, “But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from among the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from among the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.” Notice that in this verse Paul firstly speaks of Jesus and then of Christ Jesus. The name Jesus is related to His death, and the title Christ Jesus is related to resurrection and the impartation of life. Thus, death is related to Jesus, and the giving of life is related to Christ.

The death of Jesus was for the fulfillment of God’s righteousness, but the resurrection of Christ is for God’s holiness. Righteousness is God’s procedure, His way of doing things, whereas holiness is God’s nature. God’s righteous procedure is upheld by the death of Christ, but God’s nature is imparted into us through the resurrection of Christ. When God’s righteousness is upheld through the death of Christ, God is in a position to impart Himself into us through the resurrection of Christ. As the resurrected Christ comes into us, He imparts God’s nature into us. This holy nature then germinates us, generates us, and sanctifies us. The resurrected Christ within us is

the element of holiness that enlivens us. This element germinates us, enlivens us, and then sanctifies us. This is sanctification. Sanctification involves a long process which begins when we are saved and continues throughout our Christian life. In this process we are transformed and even conformed to the image of the firstborn Son of God.

Sanctification takes place through the process of resurrection. I have the assurance that we all have the resurrected Christ within us and that we are undergoing the process of sanctification through resurrection. This process is actually a person, the resurrected Christ Himself. Christ in resurrection is both our holiness and our sanctification. The difference between holiness and sanctification is that holiness denotes the very element of Christ, whereas sanctification denotes the action of that element. Hence, we are not only under the process of holiness but also under the process of sanctification. The holy element is moving and active within us to sanctify us.

ASCENSION AND GLORIFICATION

Romans covers not only the attributes of righteousness and holiness but also the attribute of glory. Glorification began at the time of Christ's

ascension, and it will consummate at His coming back. Christ's ascension is for glory. Therefore, Christ's death is for God's righteousness, His resurrection is for God's holiness, and His ascension is for God's glory. When Christ comes back, the glorification of His saints will be consummated.

This thought is found in [Romans 8](#). In [verse 17](#) Paul says that if we suffer with Christ, we shall be glorified with Him. In [verse 18](#) he goes on to say, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed to us." The whole creation is eagerly expecting to "be freed from the slavery of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God" ([v. 21](#)). In [verse 30](#) Paul says that those whom God has predestinated, called, and justified, He has also glorified. As we are being sanctified, we are also being glorified. With sanctification we enjoy a foretaste of glorification.

We have pointed out that glorification began with Christ's ascension. As believers in Christ, we are ascended with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenlies ([Eph. 2:6](#)). Christ is both in us subjectively and in the heavenlies objectively. Christ has brought us into the heavenlies, and

He has brought the heavenlies into us. When we realize the fact that we share in Christ's ascension, we experience not only sanctification but also glorification. To be in ascension is to be in glory.

SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE

We need the subjective experience of God's righteousness, holiness, and glory. To be crucified with Christ is to experience righteousness, and to have Christ live in us is to experience holiness. According to His righteousness and through His holiness, the Triune God is dispensed into us in a full way unto His glory. This means that the result of God's dispensation is glory. When people contact us or visit our homes, they should be able to sense that we have died with Christ and that Christ is living in us. If this is our situation, then we shall exhibit God's righteousness, holiness, and even His glory.

How we praise the Lord for opening the depths of this book to us! In [Romans 3 and 4](#) we see that Christ died for us and in [Romans 6](#), that we died in Christ. This death was according to God's righteousness and for His righteousness. In [Romans 6 through 8](#) we see that we are being sanctified through the living, acting, moving, and

working of the resurrected Christ within us. After the resurrected Christ germinates us and generates us, He sanctifies us. Sanctification includes transformation and conformation. As the process of sanctification takes place within us, we begin to experience God's glorification. The issue of the dispensation of the Triune God into us is glory. If we daily take our stand of having died with Christ, we shall have the subjective experience of righteousness. Then if we allow Christ to live in us, we shall have the subjective experience of holiness. The result will be glory, the expression of God from within us.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

Just as righteousness is God's procedure and holiness is God's nature, so glory is God's expression. The ultimate goal of the dispensation of the Triune God is that God be expressed through the Body of Christ. When the Body of Christ has become the expression of God's glory, that will be the time of full glorification. As [Romans 8](#) reveals, the universe is eagerly awaiting this time, anxiously waiting to enter into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. In this glory God will be expressed in a full way. This will be

the ultimate issue of the dispensation of the Triune God.

Because we all have died in Christ and are therefore righteous in the eyes of God, there is no ground for Satan to accuse us or to condemn us. Now Christ is living in us to sanctify us, to transform us, and to conform us to the image of Christ. The issue of this process is glory. This is the dispensation of the Triune God according to His righteousness, through His holiness, and unto His glory as revealed in the book of Romans.

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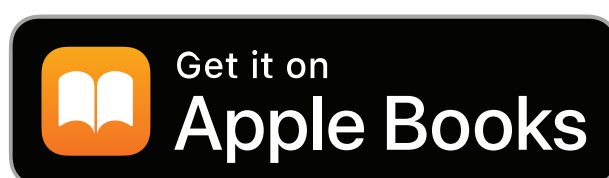
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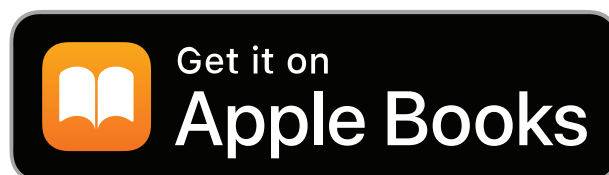
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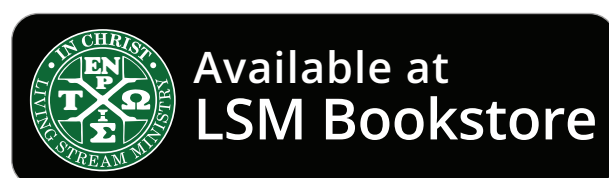


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