

This lesson presents our final and most important discussion of the Third Angel's message. Recall, that the Three Angels of Revelation 14 all typify the character, message, and works of the last day people of God. Possessing the *faith of Jesus Christ*, they are said to (Rev 14):

1. (v1) Have the Father's name written in their foreheads
2. (v4) Remain undefiled from the corruptions and false doctrines of women, [apostate churches](#) of the world
3. (v4) Follow Jesus, the Lamb, wherever He leads
4. (v4) Be redeemed from among men, being first fruits unto God and to the Lamb
5. (v5) Be without guile- genuine, and upright in character
6. (v5) Stand faultless before the throne of God

The Third Angel in particular, directs the hearer into the *Holiest of Holy* in the heavenly sanctuary, where the Ten Commandments lie, and where Christ stands as High Priest. The Third Angel describes **God's victory** in the *Last Days*, revealed in the lives of the 144,000, who by faith have attained the righteousness of Christ (Jer 23:5, 6). These ordinary people, born with a sinful nature that is common to men, by faith permit Christ to live-out His perfect life within them. By abiding in Christ, they demonstrate an extraordinary victory over sin and temptation. In this final lesson of the Three Angels of Revelation 14, we will understand the victory God has purposed for all men from the foundation of the world. This victory will however, be revealed only in those who patiently determine to "*keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus*" (Rev 14:12).

The term **righteousness** is synonymous with holiness, obedience, and godliness – God-likeness. Of the source of righteousness, we read: "*O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee.*" Daniel 9:7. "*The Lord is righteous in all His ways.*" Psalm 145:17. "*Thy righteousness is like the great mountains.*" Psalm 36:6. "*Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness.*" Psalm 119:142. "*The righteous Lord loveth righteousness.*" Psalm 11:7. "*My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments [are] righteousness.*" Psalm 119:172. "*There is no unrighteousness in Him.*" Psalm 92:15.

In contrast, the Bible reveals **sin** to be not abiding in Jesus (1 John 3:4-6), and opposed to all righteousness in the following: "*Awake to righteousness and sin not.*" 1 Cor 15:34. "*For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.*" Rom 6:20. "*Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.*" Rom 6:18. "*And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.*" Rom 8:10 "*All unrighteousness is sin*" 1 John 5:17.

Each verse above directs men to forsake the life of sin and to embrace the righteousness of God. However, the Bible unquestionably describes humankind's natural condition as being woefully under sin: "*...I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me*" (Psalm 51:5). "*...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" Romans 3:23. [we are] "*carnal, sold under sin*" Romans 7:14. "*...there is none righteous, no, not one*" Romans 3:10. [...in my flesh] "*delleth no good thing*" Romans 7:18. [We are] "*filled with*

all unrighteousness" Romans 1:29.

To intensify humankind's desperate condition, the Bible expresses our condemnation under our sinful nature: "*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.*" 1 John 3:4. "*Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*" Gal 3:10. "*...the soul that sinneth, it shall die*" Eze 18:4. "*...the wages of sin is death*" Rom 6:23.

Recognizing the unrighteous, unholy, desperate, and condemned plight of all men, the Apostle Paul wrote, "*O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from the body of this death*" Romans 7:24. Such was the cry of Adam after his fall to sin, and of all men since that time. In response, the righteous God, full of mercy and grace, has given humankind the gift of the **Gospel of Jesus Christ**. The gospel is embodied in the incarnation of Jesus Christ: His perfect life, death, and resurrection on behalf of humanity. It demonstrates the love of God towards sinful men, His justice in upholding the demands of the broken Law; and His power in conquering sin and all unrighteousness. This marvelous work of redemption, completed in Jesus' strength and by His merits alone for mankind, accomplished the following:

- Paid the debt of sin, the *Second Death*, that the law demanded of the erring human race (Galatians 3:13)
- Fulfilled all righteousness on behalf of those who come to Christ by faith (John 3:5; Matt 3:13-17; Luke 23:40-43)
- Has broken the power of sin and death over the sons of God (Romans 8:2, 3; 1 John 3:5-9; Hebrews 2:14-18)

- Has reconciled the human race to God, the Father (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Eph 2:13-15)

Taking delight in the gospel and what it means for humankind, the Apostle Paul wrote, "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth... For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith*" Romans 1:16, 17. Paul affirms that the gospel reveals God's **power** to bring salvation to all who in faith believe. Furthermore, he states that the gospel "*reveals the righteousness of God*". That is to say, by the gospel, God's righteousness and holiness are given, and are to be revealed in once sinful men.

Jesus *alone* completed the works of redemption. Hence, nothing more can be added to compliment His efforts, nor taken away to refine them. Therefore, one receives the benefits of His works *as a gift by faith alone*. This glorious transaction is summarized in the following:

"*By faith he [the sinner, who has so grievously wronged and offended God] can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure.*" -

Review and Herald, November 4, 1890. See also Romans 4:5

The sinner, who in faith embraces God's precious gift, comes to Jesus and receives the righteousness of Christ to his account, is declared **justified** before God. This legal term denotes pardon, blamelessness, and uprightness in light of God's moral law (Rom 3:21, 22). Consider that **faith** actuates the process of redemption in the sinner's life. Faith itself is a

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Revelation 14 – Part 5 [Based on Revelation 14:12]



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gift of God (Rom 12:3), given first in measure, but through exercise of use is increased. Abraham, who is called the *Father of the Faithful*, was said to have "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" Gal 3:26-29, Rom 4:3. Therefore, by faith [a gift of God] the process of salvation begins, and through faith, it is made perfect unto Christ's righteousness (Colossians 2:6; James 2:21-24).

As if Christ's works of redemption were not enough, the Father has added overflowing grace by imparting *His Holy Spirit* to dwell in those who, by faith, embrace the gospel. Called the **Baptism of the Holy Spirit**, He is given so that, "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" Acts 1:4, 5, 8; Romans 8:4. Herein lies a mystery, that Christ, living in us through the indwelling Holy Spirit, will empower us to live above sin and become partakers of His divine nature, all by faith! This victorious truth, termed **Righteousness by Faith**, and the **Mystery of Godliness** is here emphasized in Scripture:

- "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." **2 Peter 1:4**
- "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." **Ephesians 3:19** [see also: Colossians 2:9-11; 1 John 5:7; Acts 1:8]
- "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected [us], and we gave [them] reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened [us] after their

own pleasure; but he for [our] profit, that [we] might be partakers of his holiness." **Hebrews 12:9, 10**

- "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" **Titus 2:11, 12**
- "[Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints... which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" **Colossians 1:26-28** [see also: Ephesians 3:17; 1 John 4:2]

Paul, in describing the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer wrote, "For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *The just shall live by faith.*" Romans 1:17. Paul shows that the same *faith in Jesus Christ* and His completed works of redemption that first drew the believer to the Savior, when perfected by the power of the Holy Spirit, becomes the *faith of Jesus Christ* (Col 2:6, 7; Philip 1:6; Psalm 138:8; Hebrews 12:2). Jesus' faith in the Father enabled Him to be victorious over sin and the devil, to receive power to open the eyes of the blind, heal the sick, cause the lame to walk, and even raise the dead! Jesus' unwavering faith in God His Father and in His promises also kept Him upon the Cross of Calvary in order to save humankind. Foretelling the power to be given to His Apostles and His followers in the *Last Days*, Jesus declared, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater [works] than

these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 14:12.

Q: How does the Bible describe the victorious Christian life through the **faith of Jesus**? Consider the following verses:

- 1 John 5:4
- Matthew 9:29, 30
- Romans 10:17
- Matthew 17:20
- 2 Cor 1:20
- 2 Cor 5:7, 17

Q: Why have not more spoken and partaken of the beautiful gifts of **Justification by Faith** and **Righteousness by Faith**, bringing power and complete victory over sin?

A: To this question, the Apostle Paul, in speaking of the Jews wrote: "For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. 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" Romans 10:2, 3. Paul affirms that the righteousness of God is embodied in His Son, Jesus Christ (Jeremiah 23:5, 6), Who, all must come to in faith. Unless a person confesses his sins and repents, he cannot be justified with God (Luke 18:9-14). Once *justified*, we are commanded and empowered to "abide in Him" and "go, and sin no more", to walk and live Christ's victorious life by His faith (John 15:3-5, 7, 8, 8:11; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 4:1-3, 3:5, 6).

The Third Angel's message is the gospel, **Good News**, of **Righteousness by Faith**. This gospel message, man's complete victory over sin in the present age, **the mystery of godliness**, is to be testified by, and given evidence through the lives of the 144,000. May our patient hope be to "keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus"!