

Genesis, Part 8

We now enter the final stage of the second dispensation of human history, the Age of Conscience. We have seen that there are two main genealogical lines: the Line of Cain and the Line of Seth. The former is also the line of the seed of Satan and is often called the “ungodly line of Cain”. The latter is the line that will be traced down to Christ and is often called the “godly line of Seth”.

In the judgment of Satan, at the conclusion of the Age of Innocence, God said he would “put enmity between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.” That conflict is playing out in this second dispensation, the Age of Conscience. With the beginning of chapter 6 and through chapter 8, we have the conclusion of that judgment in the dispensation of the Age of Conscience.

And we immediately run into an interpretation issue.

Gen 6:1 When man began to multiply on the face of the land and daughters were born to them, ² the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose. ³ Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.” ⁴ The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward when the sons of God came into the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

We have hit a rather controversial segment of the Word of God. This passage leaves us with many questions that are difficult to answer dogmatically. Among them:

- Who are the sons of God?
- Who are the daughters of men?
- Who are the Nephilim?
- Who are the “mighty men of old, the men of renown”?

To the first two questions regarding these “sons of God” and the “daughters of men,” there are three major interpretations. Because the passage does not contain very much information, all three have some degree of merit.

Interpretation #1

One of the most accepted interpretations is that the “sons of God” (*bene ha elohim*) are those of the godly line of Seth, and the “daughters of men” are women of the ungodly line of Cain. With the “godly men” lusting after the “ungodly women,” the line of Seth gets polluted with ungodliness and sin. This would seem to be supported by the fact that so few humans, only Noah, and his family, get to enter the ark and be delivered through the deluge. All the others are destroyed. However, what were the godly women of Seth doing? They must have been making babies. Were they lusting after the ungodly men of Cain? There is no mention of them.

I have often preached “context, context, context!” Well, the immediate literary context of Genesis 4 and 5 shows the development of the rebellious line of Cain and the chosen line of Seth. Therefore, the immediate contextual evidence seems to favor the godly line of Seth being the Sons of God. In chapters 4 and 5, we have been talking about the two lines and the conflict predicted back when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden. Why would chapter 6 that follows this not also be speaking of the same subject? Many expositors think it does. This is perhaps the strongest evidence for this interpretation.

Interpretation #2

The second interpretation resembles the first with a few differences. Expositors in this camp take the position that the “sons of God” are sinful and tyrannical, human rulers. They take the position that *bene ha elohim* should be translated as “sons of kings” or “sons of nobles” and not “sons of God”. Using their high positions of authority these arrogant kings and nobles willfully and forcefully take the “daughters of men” for their sexual pleasures (“they took as their wives any they chose” Gen 6:2).

Several ancient translations support this view:

1. Targum of Onkelos (second-century a.d.) translates “sons of God” as “sons of nobles”

2. Symmachus (second-century a.d.) Greek translation of the OT translated “sons of God” as “the sons of the kings”
3. The term “*elohim*” is sometimes used of Israelite leaders in Scripture (cf. Ex. 21:6; 22:8; Ps. 82:1, 6), note NIV and NET Bible
4. *Nephilim* are linked to the *Gibborim* (“mighty men of old” in Gen 6:4), *Gibborim* is from *Gibbor* meaning “a mighty man of valor; strength; wealth or power”
5. This interpretation and its evidence are taken from *Hard Sayings of the Bible* pp. 106–108.

In my opinion, the support for this view is a bit thin.

Interpretation #3

I will say right up front that, in my opinion, this third interpretation makes the most sense and has the strongest Scriptural support. It takes the position that the “Sons of God” are angelic beings, specifically fallen angels in this case, and the “daughters of men” were the daughters of humans with a focus on those of the Godly line of Seth. The term “Sons of God” in the OT generally refers to angelic beings, as seen in the following verses:

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the *sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Job 2:1 Again there was a day when the *sons of God* came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord.

Job 38:7 when the morning stars sang together and all the *sons of God* shouted for joy?

Dan 3:25 He answered and said, “But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a *son of god*.”

In the first two Job passages, the scene is in Heaven, and we see the “sons of God” (*bene ha elohim*) presenting themselves before God. The third Job passage speaks of the angels as “sons of God” (*bene ha elohim*) being

present at the creation of the heavens and the earth and “shouting for joy”. In the Daniel passage, we see someone “like a son of God” in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

And more... Though some of the following sources are extra-Biblical, here is more evidence that the Sons of God were angelic beings.

- The inter-testamental book of 1 Enoch (cf. 1 Enoch 6:1–8:4; 12:4–6; 19:1–3; 21:1–10) and Jubilees (cf. Job 5:1), along with the *Genesis Apocryphon* from the Dead Sea Scrolls, interprets these as rebellious angels.
- The Septuagint translates the phrase “sons of God” as “angels of God”
- 1 Enoch even asserts that Noah’s Flood came to destroy this angelic/human union which was hostile towards YHWH and His plan for creation (cf. 1 Enoch 7:1ff; 15:1ff; 86:1ff).

There is a passage in Jude that may be referring to these fallen angels and their discipline.

Jude 6-7 And the angels who did not stay within their own position of authority, but left their proper dwelling, he has kept in eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day— ⁷ just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a punishment of eternal fire.

“Position of authority” is the Greek *arche* which means their place of beginning or origin. They “indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire” (v. 7). They “left their proper dwelling” which is the Greek word *oiketerion*, a dwelling place, habitation and sometimes used of the body as a dwelling place for the spirit. In modern vernacular, they stepped out of bounds, and it was a physical, sexual offense. As a result, they presently reside in “eternal chains under gloomy darkness until the judgment of the great day”.

And there is more on those angels chained in darkness...

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly.

This passage clearly connects these angels that sinned and are now committed “to chains of gloomy darkness” with the judgment of the Flood. The word “hell” in verse 4 is the Greek *tartarus*. In Greek mythology, there are half-human/half-superhuman giants called “Titans” that are said to be imprisoned in *tartarus*. This very same place is named only once in the Bible, and it is related to these angels. *Tartarus* is a compartment in Hell, a subject for another time.

The pseudepigraphical book of 1 Enoch states that 200 angels who fell from heaven saw the beautiful daughters of men and had relations with them, creating a progeny of semi-divine giants, the Nephilim.

It is obvious to me that the Sons of God are angelic beings, and in the case of Genesis 6, they are fallen angels. These fallen angels have somehow taken on human form and had sexual relations with human women, the daughters of men. The idea is not foreign to Scripture. We see angels take human forms elsewhere such as Genesis 18:1-16 when Abraham entertains angels in human form on the way to Sodom. Also in Genesis 19:1-3, we see angels again and they eat food, a very human act. Hebrews 12:2 warns us we could entertain angels and not even be aware they are angels. It is possible that these fallen angels merely indwelt human men, but the language suggests otherwise. Their spawn was destroyed with the “ancient world” in the Flood, but Noah was preserved with his family. The fallen angels responsible for this were cast in “chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment”.

While some do, I don’t see this as in conflict with Matthew 22:30 where Jesus indicates that the angels in Heaven “neither marry nor are given in marriage”. That seems to reference those angels “in Heaven,” as in the elect angels, and imply they do not themselves reproduce and make baby angels. Angelic beings are generally referred to in the masculine tense.

It should be pointed out that the term “Son[s] of God” is sometimes used in the NT to refer to Christians, but the underlying text there is the Greek of the NT and not *bene ha elohim* which is, of course, Hebrew. Though translated the same, we conclude that the term is used differently in the NT.

The resulting progeny of this illicit union was a mongrel race of humans with corrupted DNA. Satan’s objective was to destroy the pure line from Adam to the seed of the woman who would crush his head. If he had succeeded, the line would not be a pure one of the seed of the woman and her son would not be the “Son of Man”. Satan would have defeated God and won his appeal trial. This was Satan’s first attempt to defeat God by attacking the seed of the woman, but it was not his last such attempt, which is a subject for another time.

Gen 6:3 Then the Lord said, “My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.”

Some translations have “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever.” The Hebrew word for “strive” can be translated “asremain” thus the translation “abide” in the ESV. This probably refers to God’s patience in that He postponed the flood until the ark was finished, which would be in 120 years.

That statement “for he is flesh” seems to add weight to the interpretation that the other people spoken of in the passage are angelic beings in contradistinction to mortal humans.

“His days shall be 120 years,” seems to imply a time period of grace when Noah preached during these intervening years. Some argue that this marks the point where the long lives mankind had previously experienced would now be limited to a maximum of 120 years.

My conclusion is that interpretation #3, that the “Sons of God” are fallen angels, and the “daughters of man” are human women, has the most extensive textual support. The exact mechanics of how that worked is not revealed in Scripture.

The Nephilim

Gen 6:4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days, and also afterward when the sons of God came into the daughters of man and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown.

The offspring of these “sons of God” and “daughters of men” were the Nephilim. The Hebrew means giants or the “fallen ones”. The designation “Nephilim” is a transliteration of the Hebrew word into English. The Nephilim were “the mighty men who were of old, the men of renown,” the ancient “supermen” supposed to be the offspring of these unions.

The pseudepigraphical book of 1 Enoch asserts that these giants were the result of the union of angels and humans and that the mixing of the orders of creation is the reason God sent the Flood. 1 Enoch also asserts that these giants who lost their physical bodies in the flood are the demons seeking to indwell human bodies for their own selfish reasons. But that conflicts with the argument that they are those demons incarcerated in chains and darkness of 2 Peter 2:4-5. It must also be pointed out that 1 Enoch is not considered canonical.

Due to the enigmatic nature of the Nephilim, various interpretations for this class of beings have been offered by many groups. They typically identify the Nephilim as either giants, semi-divine beings, or a combination of the two. What I think the passage is saying is these “mighty men” and “men of renown” were the characters we know in Greek and Roman mythology, only they weren’t entirely mythical. *Some* were real and their exploits were real though probably mostly elaborations and some outright fabrications.

Several people groups appear in the Masoretic Text whose names serve as either synonyms for the Nephilim or who are suggested to be ancestrally related to them (the latter three used interchangeably in Deut 2:10–11, 20):

- Anakim
- Rephaim
- Emim
- Zamzummim

Deut 2:10 The Emim formerly lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim. ¹¹ Like the Anakim they are also counted as Rephaim, but the Moabites call them Emim.

Deut 2:20 It is also counted as a land of Rephaim. Rephaim formerly lived there—but the Ammonites call them Zamzummim.

In the Flood everyone but Noah and his family were drowned. This would have included the Nephilim. However, we see references to them show up later in the Bible as demonstrated in the two Deuteronomy passages above and later in Numbers.

Num 13:32 ...“The land, through which we have gone to spy it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great height. ³³ And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim), and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.”

That passage is from the report of the spies Moses sent into the land. They came back reporting there were giants in the land that made the spies look like grasshoppers next to them. They probably use “Nephilim” as dramatic hyperbole for a race of very tall people then living in Canaan.

Gen 14:5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim,

This passage is from when Abraham rescued his cousin Lot. There are other references to the Nephilim and their relations but they shed little light on our subject.

We should also mention the much later incident between David and a “giant” called Goliath. Scripture does not say Goliath was a descendant of the Nephilim, but he was very tall at 9’ 9” according to the MT.

With the “true” Nephilim drowned in the flood and their demon spirits incarcerated in Tartarus, it seems obvious that God has cut off that line of

attack and the ability of angelic beings to cohabit with humans. Then who are those mentioned after the Flood in Scripture? We conclude that the use of the term “Nephilim” *after the Flood* is used more in a hyperbolic sense. We call all tissues “Kleenex” but there is only one brand of Kleenex. The others may be similar but they are not Kleenex. The word “Nephilim” took on a significance that was applied to all groups that were very tall and especially formidable.

Gen 6:5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

“The wickedness of man was great...” and “every intention” (better, “plan,” *yēṣer*) of their hearts “was only evil continually”. Genesis 8:21 says, “The intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” There is hardly a stronger statement in the Bible about the sin of mankind. This passage gives insight into Jesus’ explanation that “before the Flood people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage” (Matt. 24:38)—seemingly a harmless statement until its context is studied. Nephilim were roaming about, and man was “corrupt” and “full of violence”.

“Only evil continually.” That is a perfect description of unredeemed men and women of any era—including our own. Human beings are not basically good. Because of the curse brought about by Adam’s sin, human beings are basically bad—completely sinful. How can I say such a thing? We can look around the world and see good things being attempted and noble tasks being achieved. But the problem is not simply with our attempts and our achievements. The problem is with our hearts. Until we come to bow the knee to Jesus Christ as King of the universe, our own agendas remain on the thrones of our hearts—we are without God in the world. And that means that even our best acts are godless acts.

To put it another way: if our hearts are godless, then even our most altruistic deeds are filthy rags because they are done by our own self-effort and not through the strength that God supplies.

Isa 64:6 But we are all like an unclean *thing*, and all our righteousnesses *are* like filthy rags

And that, even in the most loving and giving among us, leads to secret pride: “Look at what *I* achieved”; “Look at who *we* helped”; “Look at what *mankind* has accomplished.” And in that kind of thinking, subtle or unspoken as it may be, it robs the glory of God who made us and who alone gives us the ability to accomplish what is meaningful.

Some of us do “only evil continually” by blatantly rebelling against God. Others of us do “only evil continually” by failing to acknowledge God as the giver of every good and perfect gift—including the gifts we give to others. But both lifestyles are equally godless and, as we shall see, worthy of judgment.

Gen 6:6 And the Lord regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

The word translated “regretted” is translated elsewhere as “repented”. “Regretted” is a better translation but both suggest that God changed His mind, which God cannot do. He is changeless (Mal. 3:6). Thus what we have here is an anthropathism to describe God’s feelings in human terms. It is the ascribing to God human attributes or emotions He does not actually possess. Man’s actions “grieved him to his heart”. On the level of his divine will, God knew that creation was no mistake. But on the level of his emotions, the way man turned out brought great sorrow. So God could say, with all honesty, that he was “sorry that He had made man,” and yet still be the God who never makes a mistake. His heart is broken over men and women who choose to live without him, rebelling against his laws and ignoring his kindness.

Gen 6:7 So the Lord said, “I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land, man and animals and creeping things and birds of the heavens, for I am sorry that I have made them.”

The term “blot out” means “to wash away” and is a reference to the Flood. The animals suffer because of the sin of mankind (cf. Rom. 8:19–22), but

the fish are not included. This judgment is not based on the capricious actions of the gods as in the Mesopotamian accounts but on the moral evil of humanity. This evil remains even within the family of righteous Noah as seen in 8:21–22 where after the Flood God says, “the intention of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” But God’s grace chooses to cover continuing human evil until the coming of Christ.

Even though judgment would fall, it would be delayed 120 years (v. 3). During this time Noah was “a herald of righteousness”.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until the judgment; ⁵ if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven others, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly

That word translated as “herald” should be translated as “preacher”. For all those 120 years, Noah was God’s representative in a fallen world. As he built the Ark, he preached the truth of God’s Word and prophesied of the coming judgment for failure to repent and turn to God, thus we have the testimony in verse 8.

Gen 6:8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Righteousness

In the OT, God’s character is described as “just” or “righteous”. The Mesopotamian term itself comes from a river reed which was used as a construction tool to judge the straightness of walls and fences and as a measuring rod. God chose the term to be used metaphorically of His own nature. He is the straight edge (ruler) by which all things are evaluated. This concept asserts God’s righteousness as well as His right to judge.

Man was created in the image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26–27; 5:1, 3; 9:6). Mankind was created for fellowship with God. All of creation is a stage or backdrop for God and mankind’s interaction. God wanted His highest creation, mankind, to know Him, love Him, serve Him, and be like Him! Mankind’s loyalty was tested (cf. Gen. 3) and the original couple failed the

test. This resulted in a disruption of the relationship between God and humanity (cf. Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12–21).

God promised to repair and restore the fellowship (cf. Gen. 3:15). He does this through His own will and His own Son. Because of the Fall, humans were incapable of appropriate action (cf. Rom. 3:21–31; Gal. 3). God Himself had to take the initiative to restore covenant-breaking humans. He did this by

- *declaring* sinful mankind righteous through the work of Christ (forensic righteousness).
- *freely giving* mankind righteousness through the work of Christ (imputed righteousness).
- *providing* the indwelling Spirit who produces righteousness (ethical righteousness) in mankind.
- *restoring* the fellowship of the garden of Eden by Christ restoring the image of God (cf. Gen. 1:26–27) in believers (relational righteousness).

Dikaiosune

The word “righteousness,” *dikaiosune*, is one of the most significant words in the New Testament; it means much more than simply righteousness. It can also mean “justice.” *Dikaiosune* is a second-stage development in the Greek language in that it comes from two older words, the noun *dike* and the adjective *dikaios*. The difference between *dikaiosune* and its two predecessors is the suffix *sune*, and that suffix makes all the difference in the world.

The Greeks developed a system of abstract thought that reached its peak in Athens in the fifth century B.C. Concurrent with this brilliant advance in thinking, they refined their language over several generations until the Attic Greek of classical times was rich enough to express all the literary sophistication and nuance of meaning conceived by such men as Plato, Sophocles, Euripides, and many others. The suffix *sune* changed the meaning of a noun or adjective from simple to the complex, from concrete to the abstract.

The Greek word for beauty doesn't take the suffix *sune* but we can use it to illustrate the change in Greek thought. In Homer's day, in the ninth century B.C., a young man might exclaim, "That woman is beautiful!" The thought would be going no further than external appearance. But among philosophers four hundred years after Homer, the concept had gone beyond mere feminine pulchritude. To these thinkers, beauty was an abstract concept of balance and symmetry that included the soul and the outer beauty of the physical form. This is what *sune* would do to the meaning of a noun or adjective.

The concept of justice underwent a change too, and the development from the specific to the abstract is reflected in the change from *dike* and *dikaios* to *dikaiosune*. The word was first used in the fifth century B.C. by the historian Herodotus in telling the story of Solon, the farseeing statesman whose laws had saved Athens over a hundred years before.

In Solon's day, the government leaders had woven a web of decrees that tyrannized and exploited the citizens of Attica, the city-state of which Athens was the capital. These decrees placed a heavy burden on business, suppressing free enterprise and restricting freedom. Authority was abused by the government.

Solon was an aristocratic member of the ruling assembly and eventually became *archon*, "the ruler." While serving his term he persuaded the Athenians to adopt a new code. The old tyranny was set aside in favor of a completely new set of laws guaranteeing freedom for every citizen. Privacy and property were protected, and free enterprise became the order of the day. Attica prospered.

Solon was confident. He knew he had the right answers, and he did a very clever thing. He convinced the Athenians to pass one more law decreeing that no one could add or subtract from the law – except Solon himself.

Did Solon sit around figuring out how he would take complete control of the government, and which laws he would enact next to set himself up as dictator? Nope. Solon was a brilliant man. He took a ten-year sabbatical and left the Athenians to live by the excellent laws already in force. Even

today Solon's code is considered to be one of the best legal systems of all time. It helped the city-state become one of the most powerful empires of antiquity.

The legislation of Solon greatly influenced the meaning of the word *dikaiosune*. With Solon absent, his law could not be expanded or rescinded; the people of Athens had to *adjust* to what he had left them. Under this system of law, Herodotus first coined *dikaiosune* as a legal term, meaning "the thinking of a judge in allotting to each one what was due him."

The abstract concept of fairness indirectly included those under the law so that the citizens who adjusted to the justice of Solon were said to possess *dikaiosune* or "civil virtue." The connotation of the word, however, is not the justice of the people but the justice of the person in authority – the judge in a court of law – to whose justice the people had adjusted. Many classical writers used the term in this sense. *Dikaiosune* then means "adjustment to the law," and that is the sense in which "righteousness" is a correct translation; but "justice" is an equally accurate translation. *Dikaiosune* is translated as "righteousness" ninety-two times in the New Testament.

2 Ti 2:22 But flee youthful lusts, and follow after righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

What righteousness approves justice blesses; what righteousness condemns justice disciplines.

In 280 B.C., over a century after the Golden Age of Greece, as legend has it, seventy-two scholars in Alexandria, Egypt, translated the Old Testament Scriptures from Hebrew to Greek. In this amazingly accurate version called the Septuagint, *dikaiosune* stood for the Hebrew words *tesdeq* and *tsedaqah*, which can mean either righteousness or justice. The concepts are so interrelated that sometimes they cannot be distinguished, and the Hebrew does not attempt to do so. Wherever God's righteousness appears in the Old Testament, *dikaiosune* stands for it in the Septuagint. God instead of Solon becomes the norm; and believers, instead of Athenians, are called *dikaiosune* when they observe the will of God – when they have *adjusted* to the justice of God.

Both Philo and Josephus use *dikaiosune* in extrabiblical literature contemporary with Christ and Paul. Philo, a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher living in Alexandria, makes *dikaiosune* a divine attribute in terms of the ethics of stoicism. Josephus, the Jewish historian, uses *dikaiosune* as an adjustment to the law, hence “legal righteousness or righteousness in judicial thinking.” It emphasizes the judge’s sense of justice, and his ability to render a fair judgment.

By the time it entered the Koine Greek of the New Testament, *dikaiosune* carried a wealth of meanings. It means “justice” as a characteristic of the judge, as the legal thinking of the judge, as the professional integrity of the judge. It means “righteousness” not only in the sense of being good but as a principle leading to correct thought and action. It means “to be fair and equitable in dealing with others.”

Both Philo and Josephus applied this word to God, using the same phrase we find in Romans 1:17, *dikaiosune theou*. But these two writers possessed a limited or erroneous concept of God, whereas the human writers of New Testament Scripture under the Holy Spirit gave *dikaiosune* its full, doctrinal meaning. In Scripture, *dikaiosune* of God means one of two things:

1. His righteousness as the principle or standard of His integrity.
2. His justice as a function or action of His integrity.

The genitive case of *Theos* makes the difference between these definitions: it is both subjective and possessive genitive. *Theos* in the possessive genitive indicates something God possesses as a principle or standard – perfect righteousness (+R). In the subjective genitive, the noun is the subject of the action. In other words, it produces the action. God’s perfect righteousness is expressed through His justice in judging mankind. The perfect standard is applied in a judicial fashion to man.

As a principle, *dikaiosune theou* involves God alone apart from man, but as a divine action, it includes man. *Dikaiosune* is sometimes used as a synonym for *eusebeia*, “godliness” and, as such, becomes a technical term

for spiritual maturity. Spiritual maturity is the believer's maximum adjustment to the justice of God.

Dikaosune is also used in the forensic sense of meaning "justification." God is the expert judge and has all the evidence and can pronounce only a fair and objective judgment. God's justice condemns man born with Adam's sin imputed to them. Further, man's relative righteousness (–R) cannot save man from this condemnation. But when a person believes in Christ, God is free because of what Christ did at the Cross to credit to that person His own righteousness (Rom 3:21-26; 5:7, 19; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 3:9; Heb 11:7), the very principle of divine integrity. Immediately, the judge, God, recognizes this new piece of evidence in the case. Since the believer possesses God's own righteousness, God pronounces him *dikaosune* – righteous, justified. This is the essence of salvation.

Righteousness is a covenantal, reciprocal action between God and His highest creation. It is based on the character of God, the work of Christ, and the enabling of the Spirit, to which each individual must personally respond appropriately. YHWH is a just, ethical, moral God. He wants His people to reflect His character. Redeemed mankind becomes a new creature. This newness results in a new lifestyle of godliness.

From Gen. 4–Rev. 20, is a record of God's restoring the fellowship of Eden. The Bible starts with God and mankind in fellowship in an earthly setting (cf. Gen. 1–2) and the Bible ends with the same setting (cf. Rev. 21–22). God's righteous image and purpose will be restored!