

Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect. (Hebrews 12:22-23)

Think of it! Here are righteous persons who have been made perfect or fully mature or complete! These are persons who were declared perfectly righteous on the basis of the credited righteousness of Christ, but who were far from perfect in their character and conduct. But now (at the time of which the writer was speaking) they have been made perfect in character and conduct!

The Apostle John says, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is." We will be like Him, the risen, ascended, glorified Christ, our Savior and Lord!

This glorification will include, not only deliverance from the remaining power and the very presence of sin, but also the redemption of our bodies, through resurrection or transformation. And it will include the production of such a righteous character and conduct in us as we have never known or experienced before!

Paul speaks of this third phase in Romans 8:14-18 and 28-30.

Now we can get before us all of the steps, phases, and motifs related to sanctification. Now also we can suggest a more comprehensive outline of the components of sanctification, and a diagram of the way of progressive sanctification.

CONCLUSION

What a wonderful plan of salvation has been provided for us through Christ!

Now we can look back to Romans 1:16-17 and grasp the full significance of what Paul meant when he wrote, "For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed by faith from first to last."

Now we can add a fourth meaning of the righteousness of God to the other three; namely, God's production of righteous character and conduct (moral righteousness or holiness), in the one who trusts in Christ and His atoning work.

What a wonderful revelation of the righteousness of God is found in the gospel! What marvelous good news! And what a wonderful deliverance from sin and to righteousness is applied to every one who trusts in Jesus Christ!

No wonder the Apostle ends this third major section of his epistle by asking, "What then shall we say to these things?" In 8:31-39 he asks and answers three important questions:

First, who can be against us, if God is for us?

Second, who can condemn us, if God declares us righteous?

Third, who can separate us from God's love, if God loves us in Christ and for His sake?