

The Righteous Person:

Matt. 10,40 “Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41 Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a **righteous person** in the name of a **righteous person** will receive the reward of the **righteous**; 42 and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.”

1. What is a righteous person?
2. What is their mission?
3. What is their fate?

The Righteous Person in the Torah:

Noah is identified as the first *Saddîq* based upon the description of him in Gen. 6:9 as a 'righteous man (MT: יָדָיִק; LXX: δίκαιος), perfect (MT: תָּמִיד; LXX: τέλειος) in his generation' (cf. 7:1)

The Righteous Person in the Prophets:

If a man is **righteous** and does what is **lawful and right** — if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbour's wife or approach a woman during her menstrual period, does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, **gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment**, does not take advance or accrued interest, withholds his hand from iniquity, executes true justice between contending parties, follows my statutes, and is careful to observe my ordinances, acting faithfully—such a one is righteous; he shall surely live, says the Lord GOD. (Ezek. 18:5-9)

Psa. 15,0 *A Psalm of David.*

1 O LORD, who may abide in your tent?
Who may dwell on your holy hill?

Psa. 15,2 Those who walk blamelessly, and do what is
right (LXX, δικαιοσύνην),

and speak the truth from their heart;

3 who do not slander with their tongue,
and do no evil to their friends,
nor take up a reproach against their neighbors;

4 in whose eyes the wicked are despised,
but who honour those who fear the LORD;
who stand by their oath even to their hurt;

5 who do not lend money at interest,
and do not take a bribe against the innocent.

A. Positive Conditions (v 2)

- (i) walking blamelessly
- (ii) doing right
- (iii) speaking truth

C. Positive Conditions (v 4)

- (vii) despise reprobates
- (viii) swear to do good

B. Negative Conditions (v 3)

- (iv) no falsity
- (v) no evil
- (vi) no reproach

D. Negative Conditions (v 5)

- (ix) no usury
- (x) no bribery

Righteous Persons in Jewish Traditions:

The righteous person reflected the justice of God by keeping his laws and the compassion of God by giving **charity** (sedaqa, cf. *Peah*).

Righteous Persons in the Gospel of Matthew:

Mary's husband, Joseph, was a *Saddîq*: 'Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man (δίκαιος ὢν) and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly' (Matt. 1:19).

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness (τὴν δικαιοσύνην), for they will be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

Who are the righteous persons of our age?

2. What is their mission?

The destruction of Sodom serves as a *type* in the teachings of Jesus (Matt. 10:15; 11:23-24).

Matt. 10,11 Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of **Sodom and Gomorrah** on the day of **judgment** than for that town.

The destruction of Sodom serves as a *type* in the teachings of Jesus (Matt. 10:15; 11:23-24).

Matt. 11,23 And you, Capernaum,
will you be exalted to heaven?

No, you will be brought down to Hades.

For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in **Sodom**, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of **Sodom** than for you.”

The destruction of Sodom serves as a *type* in the teachings of Jesus (Matt. 10:15; 11:23-24).

Matt. 24,15 “So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), 16 then those in Judea must **flee to the mountains (cf. Gen. 19:17)**; 17 the one on the housetop **must not go down** to take what is in the house; 18 the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. 19 Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! 20 Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. 21 For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.

- Abraham appeals to the Lord's justice: 'Far be it from you to do such a thing, to slay the **righteous** with the wicked, so that the **righteous** fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! **Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?**' (Gen. 18:25)
- Yahweh would spare Sodom if there were just ten righteous persons present.

How can we increase the number of righteous persons in the cities of Sodom, Galilee (and Scotland)?

Method 1: Directly import them from outside

Method 2: Prompt the community to extend charity to the disciples

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Matt. 10,7 As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8 Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. 9 Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, 10 no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for labourers deserve their food. 11 Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is **worthy**, and stay there until you leave. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

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Matt. 25,34 Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; 35 for I was **hungry** and you gave me food, I was **thirsty** and you gave me something to drink, I was a **stranger** and you welcomed me, 36 I was **naked** and you gave me clothing, I was **sick** and you took care of me, I was in **prison** and you visited me.' 37 Then the **righteous** will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? 38 And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? 39 And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40 And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, **just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.**'

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How many righteous persons does it take to save the city/nation?

50, 45, 40, 30, 20, 10?

3. What is their fate?

Jesus dies as *innocent/righteous blood*:

Matt. 27,4 He said, “I have sinned by betraying **innocent blood** (αἷμα ἄθῳον).” But they said, “What is that to us? See to it yourself.”

Pilate’s wife declares Jesus to be a **Righteous Person** (τῷ δικαίῳ ἐκείνῳ, 27:19).

Matt. 27,24 So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am **innocent** (θῳός εἰμι) of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”

Some of Jesus' followers will die as *innocent/righteous blood*:

Matt. 23,34 Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, 35 so that upon you may come all the **righteous blood** shed on earth, from the blood of **righteous Abel** to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.

Gen. 4,8 Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let us go out to the field.” And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” He said, “I do not know; am I my brother’s keeper?” 10 And the LORD said, “What have you done? Listen; **your brother’s blood(s) is crying out to me from the ground!**”

2Chr. 24,20 Then the spirit of God took possession of Zechariah son of the priest Jehoiada; he stood above the people and said to them, “Thus says God: Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, he has also forsaken you.” 21 But they conspired against him, and by command of the king they stoned him to death in the court of the house of the LORD. 22 King Joash did not remember the kindness that Jehoiada, Zechariah’s father, had shown him, but killed his son. As he was dying, he said, “May the LORD see and avenge!”



Patrick Hamilton, burnt at the stake in St Andrews, 1528



Anglican bishops Hugh Latimer, Nicholas Ridley and Thomas Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury burnt at the stake, 1555



Islamic State execute Ethiopian Christians, Wilayat Barqa, 2015

Implications

1. We are righteous not to save ourselves but to save our community
2. Delaying judgement involves mixing with the community and accepting its help
3. Speeding up judgement involves extreme personal sacrifice
4. We are active agents in the judgement of others