



“I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high” (Psalm 7:17).

God Is Righteous

Central Truth: Praise for a righteous God comes only from a person whose heart has been made right by the shed blood of Christ.

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Topic: God: Attributes of; Righteousness: Of God.

God is right and does right. He is never wrong in plan or performance, attitude or action. He loves holiness and hates sin. He rewards holiness and punishes wickedness. He is a righteous God.

The Bible affirms repeatedly the righteousness of God. *“Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne”* (Psalm 97:2). *“The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works”* (Psalm 145: 17). *“This is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”* (Jeremiah 23:6). *“Ye know that he is righteous”* (I John 2:29). Anyone who believes the Bible accepts without question the fact that God is righteous in His person and in His works.

Why, then, should a study be given to the righteousness of God? (1) It stills the tongue of the unbeliever who questions some of His ways. (2) It assures the heart of the saint who is suffering by not understanding what God is doing. (3) It reveals one of the precious attributes of God to help human beings know Him better. (4) It assures the faith of believers with a confidence that He does all things right. You will find personal benefit if you pursue this study with a heart open to meet God as you are taught by the Holy Spirit.

I. DEFINITION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

A. To be “righteous” means to be morally blameless, to act in a

right and upright manner, to do always what is right. You can see the word right in *RIGHTeous*.

Formerly, the word righteous was spelled “rightwiseness.” That makes its meaning clearer. It has the quality of holiness, separation from anything that is wicked or wrong. Righteousness is often used as a synonym for faithfulness, truthfulness, holiness, or justness. It always means to be right in character and do right in conduct.

B. God is righteous. All He does is right. He never does anything wrong. The Bible says, *“The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure”* (Psalm 111:7). *“His work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he”* (Deuteronomy 32:4). It can be said of God, as it was said of Jesus, that He *“did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth”* (I Peter 2:22).

The righteousness of God is the basis of the appeal for righteousness in those who trust God. The righteous life in the Christian derives from the righteous character imparted at conversion. It is the principle of I Peter 1:15, *“As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.”* *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him”* (I John 2:29).

II. DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

A. God is righteous in His nature. *“He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he”* (Deuteronomy 32:4). Of whom else can it be said that his work is perfect, he is without iniquity, and he is just and right? Of no other but God. Concerning man the Bible says, *“There is none righteous, no, not one”* (Romans 3:10). How the righteousness of God stands out against the sinfulness of man! God does right because He is right. His nature is righteous, so the deeds which issue from His nature are righteous also. The God with whom we have to do is righteous.

B. God is righteous in His judgment. When the Hebrews returned from Babylonian captivity, they ended seventy years of exile from their native land. How would they feel toward God? Would they be angry with Him and turn from Him because of His discipline? Not at all. Instead, they said, *“O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous”* (Ezra 9:15).

Even the judgment of God is right and true. He never punishes out of anger or a spirit of vengeance. He always disciplines in the right way, at the right time, to the right extent, and for the right purposes. If the judgment of God's discipline falls on you, know that He is righteous even in judgment.

C. God is righteous in His dwelling place. The Bible says that God dwells in heaven. Then it adds, *“The heavens declare his righteousness”* (Psalm 97:6). Concerning the heavenly city, John wrote, *“There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life”* (Revelation 21:27). God is so holy that even His dwelling place is holy.

D. God is righteous in His name. The prophet Jeremiah said His name would be called, *“THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS”* (Jeremiah 23:6). The name of God is so sacred that it must never be taken lightly (Exodus 20:7). God's name reflects His nature; so, the one is as holy as the other. Therefore, *“Stand up and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise”* (Nehemiah 9:5).

E. God is righteous in His influence. His righteousness challenges us to be righteous. *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him”* (I John 2:29). *“Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure”* (I John 3:3). In the heart of every believer is the divine imperative, *“As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”* (1 Peter 1:15, 16). Do you feel an inward appeal to live righteously and godly in this present world?

F. God is righteous in His Word. Psalm 19:7-10 gives one of the most beautiful descriptions of the Word of God to be found in Holy Scripture. In its nature it is law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, and judgment. In its qualities it is perfect, sure, right, pure, enduring, true, and righteous. In its effect it converts the soul, makes wise the unlearned, rejoices the heart, enlightens the eyes, and is to be desired more than appetizing food and valued more than purest gold. Praise God for His infallible Word!

G. God is righteous in His acts. *“Thy right hand is full of righteousness”* (Psalm 48:10). Since the hand is used commonly in the Bible to refer to one's acts, the text says God's actions are always right. More clearly, Psalm 145:17 declares, *“The LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”* What one is determines what he does. God is righteous and does righteously.

III. DEMONSTRATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

Psalm 7 is an appeal for the judgment of God to come and set things right. Over and over the call is made: *“The LORD shall judge the people:*

judge me, O LORD, according to thy righteousness. . . . The righteous God trieth the hearts and reins” (verses 8, 9). So look at the righteousness of God as demonstrated in His act of judgment.

A. God is righteous in judging men. *“He is a God that judgeth in the earth”* (Psalm 58:11). *“He cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth”* (Psalm 96:13). *“God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work”* (Ecclesiastes 3:17).

It is right for God to judge men. He made man and made man accountable to Him. He is right to reward good and to punish bad. Some deny that God will judge sinners because He is a God of love. But He would not be the God revealed in the Bible if He did not judge men. He is right in judging us.

B. God is righteous in judging good men. Read Psalm 7:8-11. It speaks of God judging the psalmist along with other men. Good men should be judged to reward them for their goodness. God is right to do that.

God evaluates every act and motive, *“the thoughts and intents of the heart”* as Hebrews 4:12 states it. He will judge correctly because all things are stripped bare and revealed to His eyes (Hebrews 4:13).

God judges the righteous to defend them. *“My defence is of God, which saveth the upright in heart”* (Psalm 7:10). They can depend on Him to help in time of trouble (Psalm 37:39, 40). He will defend the righteous, being a shield over them with grace (Psalm 5:11,12). Thank God for His judgment of the saints.

“Wherefore we labour, that . . . we may be accepted of him” (II Corinthians 5:9).

C. God is righteous in judging the wicked. Read of that judgment in Psalm 7:9, 11-16. Why does He judge the wicked?

1. He judges the wicked to end their wickedness. *“Oh let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end”* (Psalm 7:9). It will happen. *“The transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off”* (Psalm 37:38). *“Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors”* (Psalm 73: 18, 19). Thus shall all wickedness meet its end.

2. God judges the wicked to show His anger at sin. *“God is angry with the wicked every day”* (Psalm 7:11). The fire of the Lord burned and consumed sinners in ancient Israel (Numbers 11:1). The disease of leprosy came on one who murmured against God's appointed leader (Numbers 12:1-15). Death came to those who turned from God to idolatry (Numbers 25:1-

13). God's settled opposition to sin in every form is indicated by His judgment on sinners. Be warned.

3. God judges the wicked to call sinners to repentance (Psalm 7:12). The purpose of the Babylonian captivity of Judah was to turn her again to the Lord God and purify her for His purpose; and that was the result of the bondage. Judgment is not just a vindictive act. It is a warning to call sinners to repentance.

The judgment of God on the wicked is severe. Read Psalm 7:12-16 and notice the warning. God's bow is set; His arrows are at hand. Instruments of death are before Him. Let the sinner beware, for *“his mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate”* (Psalm 7:16). Be warned and repent. The retribution of God is certain and severe (Exodus 32:34; Psalm 37:15; Isaiah 65:6, 7; Jeremiah 51:56). Beware of the righteous judgment of God.

A study of the righteousness of God, whether expressed in blessing or in judgment, brings forth praise. It is appropriate to conclude this study with the words of Psalm 7:17, *“I will praise the LORD according to his righteousness: and will sing praise to the name of the LORD most high.”* Amen and amen.

Questions

1. What is meant by the statement “God is righteous”?
2. How do Psalms 48:10 and 145:17 speak of His righteousness?
3. How does I Peter 1:15 relate to I John 2:29?
4. What does Roman 3:10 say about man's righteousness?
5. How did the Babylonian captivity show the righteousness of God?
6. What does it mean to say that the name of God is righteous?
7. How does Psalm 19:7-10 show that the Word of God is righteous?
8. How does Psalm 7:8, 9 show that God is righteous in judging men?
9. What does the righteousness of God mean in your life?
10. How can you show praise to God for His righteousness?