

Names of God from the Bible

9 – YHWH Tsidkenu (The Lord our Righteousness)

Every name of God is an eternal Name, it's as relevant for us as it was to the Israelites. It is one of the most exciting names I know.

Reading: Jeremiah 33:6-18

I want to emphasise the difference between 'The Lord is righteous' and 'The Lord our Righteousness'. Both statements are, of course, true; however, there is a huge difference between them.

The fact that God is righteous is wonderful and most reassuring. It confirms to us that God is good and indeed incapable of anything evil, whether in thought, word or deed. His character is totally consistent and right. His judgments are just; His deeds are of the utmost integrity and stable emotions, and emanate from a benign Being who constantly works for the good of humanity and His wider creation. Consequently, we can trust Him, worship and adore Him for who He is and what He does.

Nevertheless, there is far more to God than His righteous ways with us. God created us to have an intimate friendship with Him. Through Adam and Eve's example, we chose to relish our independence and so rebelled against the goodness of God, and embraced selfishness and wickedness, known as sin. The result of that choice was the destruction of our relationship with God and the immutable sentence of facing God's wrath, followed by an eternal existence in Hell, away from God's Presence.

How could a good God allow that? Quite easily. The righteous will go directly to Heaven and His eternal Presence. That is the righteousness of God. However, there was a problem. Subsequent to Adam and Eve's bad choice, every human being has been 'born in sin', and is, as a result, unrighteous. Indeed, Isaiah tells us that *all our righteous acts are like filthy rags* in God's eyes. The psalmist confirms that *there is no-one who does good*. Consequently, all of humanity is in trouble. Each of us is destined to suffer God's righteous wrath against sin and an eternity in Hell.

The God of the Bible is merciful as well as righteous. He cannot allow evil to enter His presence and yet He hated to see our self-destruction. He also realised that there was nothing we could do to rectify our plight. In a sense, His entire plan of Creation and the multiplication of His righteous Kingdom had 'exploded' in His face. Satan appeared to have won. But righteousness always triumphs over evil; God always triumphs over Satan, the evil one.

God established a plan whereby the price could be paid and righteousness imputed to us. We would never be good enough and there was nothing we could do to earn righteousness – we were each a hopeless case until God intervened.

God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into our world, the sinless for the sinful, to die and so pay the price required by the righteousness of God. God laid on Jesus all our sins. When Jesus died on the cross, He bore our sins in His own body and, in dying, set us free to have a relationship with God as our Heavenly Father. God the Father saw the purity of the sacrifice of Jesus and His righteousness, and agreed that it satisfied the demands of a Righteous God, thus negating the sentence and power of His wrath.

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For all those people who ask God for the forgiveness of their sins and claim the sacrifice that Jesus made on their behalf, God sees them righteous. God sees them, if you like, through the filter of Jesus. God sees the righteousness of Jesus resting on them. They are forgiven and clean. Jesus, for them has become – The Lord their righteousness.

What does that name mean for us today

It means that although I am selfish and in rebellion against God, and although I may have messed up in the worst way possible, if I come to God through Jesus Christ and ask for His forgiveness, God sees me as Righteous – not by my righteousness but through the righteousness of Jesus. I can know I am bound for eternity with God in Heaven.

Prayer

Father, thank You so much for Your mercy and grace. Thank You for Your plan of salvation. Thank You Jesus for dying in my place and for giving to me Your righteousness. Thank You that I can know an intimate friendship with You now, which will carry on for eternity. Amen.

Additional Readings

- Isaiah 64:1-9
- Romans 3:9-26
- James 2:14-26

Questions

1. Why is God prepared to look on us as righteous?
2. How do you feel knowing that you are righteous before God?
3. How does Jesus fulfil the name, The Lord our Righteousness?