

Doctrine of Righteousness

1. There are several Hebrew words to translate the word "right." Two important words are "yasar" and "mispat."
2. *Yasar* has the sense of "being straight" while the "mispat" is a legal term meaning "judgment" as in a verdict rendered.
 - *Genesis 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*
3. In the New Testament the main word is "dikaios" meaning "equal." It is usually translated "just" or "righteous."
4. The concept of "right" in the sense of "fair" or "equal" is discerned early in the developing consciousness of a child.
5. In a social gathering it is the office of a judge to declare what is right. In the Hebrew community, the judges acted on the behalf of God.
 - *Deuteronomy 1:17 Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's: and the cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.*
6. God is the Judge of all the earth. He cannot act unfairly.
 - *Genesis 18:25 That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*
7. God is the fountain or source of justice.
 - *Deuteronomy 32:4 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. 4 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.*
 - *Romans 9:14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.*
8. God's integrity as Judge will be seen most clearly "in the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his works".
 - *Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;*

9. Since God's verdict is absolutely just, man's righteousness may be defined in terms of God's judgment. "*Sedek*" and "*sedafa*" in the Hebrew and "*dikaioyne*" in the Greek signified that which conforms to a norm, and for the writers of scripture, that norm is the character of God Himself.
10. The prophet Amos emphasized God's impartial dealings with men and called for a similar righteousness.
- *Amos 5:15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.*
 - *Amos 5:24 But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.*
11. The manifestation of divine righteousness includes
- inflicting retribution.

Isaiah 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

2 Thessalonians 1:6 Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you;
 - defending the defenseless such as the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger.

Psalms 10:14 Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless.

Psalms 72:12 For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper.
 - protecting the people of God;
 - rescuing the saints from the oppressor.

Judges 5:11 They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

1 Samuel 12:7 Now therefore stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD of all the righteous acts of the LORD, which he did to you and to your fathers.

Exodus 9:27 And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked.
 - delivering people from sin, and from bondage to the devil.

Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

12. Righteousness is closely connected with showing mercy to the poor.

- *Matthew 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.*
- *2 Corinthians 9:9 (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. 10 Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;)*

13. Righteousness is closely associated with salvation.

- *Isaiah 45:8 Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the LORD have created it.*
- *Isaiah 46:13 I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory.*
- *Isaiah 51:5 My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth, and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust. 6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall die in like manner: but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.*

14. God declares righteous those who have faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. This righteousness is based on the redemption wrought by Christ.

- *Romans 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:*

15. The righteousness of Christ given to all who believe includes the Old Testament saints as well as God the Father anticipated the death of His Son. Therefore, He passed over sins rather than visiting people in wrath.

- *Romans 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; 26 To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*