

**Subject: *Our Righteous God***

**Scripture: *Deuteronomy 32:1-4***

We know that God is our creator, sustainer, provider, and defender. We appreciate all those things He is to us. We know He is our shepherd, king, teacher and guide. We love and appreciate Him for all these reasons. God has another role that we must not forget. He is our judge. J. I. Packer, in his book *Knowing God*, suggests four things that are true of a judge:

- A judge is a person with authority
- A judge is always identified with what is good and right
- A judge is a person of wisdom and discernment (a finder of fact)
- A judge is a person of power to execute a sentence or render a decision

All of these are true of God as judge. God is always just and right.

### **RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE BASIC QUALITY OF GOD'S CHARACTER**

The Bible describes His righteousness as very high, abundant, beyond measure, and everlasting. It is the very environment in which He lives.

God dwells in righteousness – *Psalms 97:2* *Clouds and darkness are round about him: righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.*

God delights in righteousness – *Jeremiah 9:24* *But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD. ***Micah 6:8*** He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

God defines righteousness – *Psalms 11:7* *For the righteous LORD loveth righteousness; his countenance doth behold the upright.* He not only sets the standard. He is the standard. What is right? Whatever conforms to God's moral character is right. Since we are made in the image of God all people have an inner sense of right and wrong. We also have an inner capacity to approve what is right and to condemn what is wrong. We call it conscience.

### **RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE OF GOD'S ACTIONS**

See ***Genesis 18:17-25***. God does what He does because He is who He is. Abraham understood that when he said, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" God always does what is right. The Bible says that His testimonies are righteous. His commandments, judgments, words, ways, and acts are all righteous. God is righteous in punishing the wicked and protecting believers.

When God judged the ancient world by a flood, He did the right thing. When he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone He did the right thing. When He destroyed the Egyptians by the plagues He did the right thing. When God judges sin He does the right thing. ***Revelation 19:11*** *And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. ***Acts 17:31*** Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all*

men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. Jesus is not only the world's Savior, He is also the world's Judge.

When the Lord judges believers to reward us for our service, He will do what is right.

**2 Timothy 4:7-8**<sup>7</sup> *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:*  
<sup>8</sup> *Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.*

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE MAIN FEATURE OF GOD'S KINGDOM**

The command of Jesus – **Matthew 6:33** *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.* Get your priorities in order.

The statement of Paul – **Romans 14:17** *For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* We need to major on the majors.

The prophecy of Peter – **2 Peter 3:13** *Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.* If a person has no desire for righteousness here, why would he ever enjoy Heaven?

## **RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE SPECIAL BLESSING OF GOD'S SALVATION**

**Romans 1:16-17**<sup>16</sup> *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.*<sup>17</sup> *For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* The Gospel is God's "good news." In order to appreciate the good news we have to understand the bad news.

God reveals the problem of our unrighteousness – **Romans 3:10** *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.* **Isaiah 64:6** *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* As a young boy was looking through a large old family Bible, he found a large leaf pressed between the pages. He remembered what his Sunday School teacher said about Adam and Eve wearing fig leaves to cover themselves in the Garden of Eden and said, "Mom, this could be part of Adam's underwear." Some people are trying to cover themselves with the flimsy fig leaves of religion and good works. Jesus said the Holy Spirit would convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8).

God reveals the provision of His righteousness – **Romans 10:10** *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* The Bible says we believe and we are justified (declared righteous). We commit ourselves to Christ by faith and His righteousness is imputed (credited) to us. Even in the Old Testament this is how God saved sinners. **Genesis 15:6** *And he (Abraham) believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.* **Romans 4:23-24**<sup>23</sup> *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;*<sup>24</sup> *But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.* I grew up next to Judge Gilbert Torbett, who for many years served as General Sessions Court Judge. I didn't fear him because I didn't break the law. But there is another Judge and I did break His law. "Twas grace that taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved." Another great hymn is *The Solid Rock*, "When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found, dressed in His righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne."