

The One Who is Our Righteousness



God Revealed In His Names
(Part 9)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue our theme: God Revealed in His Names, what we can know about God from the various names given him in Scripture.

In my previous talks I've been dealing with the seven covenant names of Jehovah, names that portray various aspects of God's covenant keeping faithfulness in his dealings with man. The five covenant names that I've dealt with so far are, and now I'm going to list them. If you're following these talks each day this week I suggest you try to memorize the names. First, the one who provides. Second, the one who heals. Third, the one who is our banner. Fourth, the one who is our peace. Fifth, the one who is our shepherd. Today I'm going to deal with the sixth of these covenant names, the one who is our righteousness.

This name is found in one of the many promises of restoration given to Israel found in the prophets, all of which center in the Messiah. This particular one is found in Jeremiah 24:5-6.

> "Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, When I shall raise up for David a righteous Branch [that's one of the common titles of Messiah in the Old Testament, the Branch]: and he will reign as king and act wisely and do justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely; and this is the name by which he will be called, The Lord our righteousness."

That's the sixth covenant name, the Lord our righteousness. Restoration includes the restoration of righteousness. In fact, without that, other forms of restoration would ultimately be impossible or worthless. So, God is going to restore righteousness to his people but the righteousness that he's promised to restore is in a person. Notice, the Lord our righteousness. It's not in a system of law or religion but it's in a person and that person is the promised Messiah.

You see, there are two kinds of righteousness. It's important to see that. One is our own righteousness, what we would

call self righteousness and this is not acceptable to God. In Isaiah 64:6 Isaiah says this:

> "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment."

Notice that. "All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment." We could easily understand that if Isaiah had said "All our sins are like a filthy garment." But he says, "All our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment." In other words, even the best that we can achieve in our own righteousness is totally unacceptable to God. It falls far below the standard of righteousness that God required.

So we're faced with the alternative, the kind of righteousness that we receive in a person, in the Messiah, in Jesus, or, the kind of righteousness we achieve by our own efforts. And, they are mutually exclusive. We cannot offer God both.

This is Paul's determination recorded in Philippians 3:9. He says:

> "That I may be found in him [Jesus the Christ, the Messiah], not having righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith."

Notice Paul had to renounce the kind of righteousness he could achieve by his own effort in order that he might obtain the righteousness which comes through faith in Jesus the Christ, the Messiah. You see, the great mistake that Israel made in their history, the one that had such a harmful effect on their destiny for 2,000 years is that they sought the wrong kind of righteousness. Paul explains this in Romans 10:3-4, speaking about Israel.

> "For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes."

You see, it's important we see that. The death of Christ on the cross expiated the sins and shortcomings of all who had failed to observe the Law and provided another means of righteousness, which is through faith in Christ. But those who seek to establish their own righteousness do not subject themselves to the righteousness of God which is through Christ. And the phrase "did not subject themselves" indicates that there's a kind of self humbling that we have to go through. First renouncing our own righteousness, acknowledging that our own efforts have not achieved that which God requires, and then accepting God's offer of mercy and righteousness through faith in the atoning death of Jesus Christ. This is how Paul speaks about the righteousness that's made available to us through Christ. In 2 Corinthians 5:21:

> "He made him who knew no sin [that's Jesus] to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him."

You see, there was an exchange made at the cross. Jesus was made sin without sinfulness. He became the sin offering, the great sin offering that was promised in Isaiah 53:10. His soul became the sin offering. And he became sin for us that we might have the other aspect of the exchange, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

How foolish to cling onto our own righteousness when we can have, by faith, the righteousness of God in Christ. And so, this covenant name, the Lord our righteousness, like all the other covenant names in the Old Testament, points ultimately to Jesus and to the cross. That's where the exchange took place. That's where it became possible for him to become our righteousness. After he had atoned for the sins of those who had failed to observe the Law, then he was made available to us as our righteousness. A person who is our righteousness. The Lord who is our righteousness.

Israel's restoration to God's favor is also pictured as the restoration of a marriage relationship. It's as though Israel, through the covenant made at Sinai, had been married to Jehovah. But then their unfaithfulness and their idolatry broke that marriage relationship but restoration is pictured in terms of a marriage relationship restored. This we find in many of the prophets. I'm going to read just a few passages and then bring out a beautiful truth as a result. In Hosea 2:19-20 the Lord says to Israel:

> "I will betroth you to me forever; yes, I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion, and I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. Then you will know the Lord."

You see, the word "betrothed" indicates the restoration of the marriage relationship between the Lord and his people. And then there's this beautiful passage in Isaiah 61:10.

> "I will rejoice greatly in the Lord, my soul will exult in my God; for he has clothed me with garments of

> salvation, he has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, [notice that robe of righteousness that covers us completely] as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

And then, again, in Isaiah 62:4-5, a promise to Israel's land and to Israel as a people.

> "It will no longer be said to you, Forsaken, nor to your land will it any longer be said, Desolate; but you will be called My delight is in her, and your land, Married; for the Lord delights in you, and to him your land will be married, for as a young man marries a virgin, so your sons will marry you; and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so your God will rejoice over you."

So, you see, restoration of righteousness brings the restoration of that marriage relationship. The Lord can be married, once more, to his people because their sins have been atoned for and they're clothed with the robe of his righteousness.

And this is brought out also in a very beautiful way in the prophet Jeremiah. In Jeremiah 23 we red the passage were it says, "this is the name by which he [the Lord] will be called." But now, let me read to you from Jeremiah 33 and you'll see what I call the other side of the coin, the corresponding passage. Jeremiah 33:15-16:

> "In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch of David to spring forth..."

I pointed out the righteous Branch is always the Messiah.

> "...and he shall execute justice and righteousness on the earth. In those days Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she shall be called: the Lord is our righteousness."

Isn't that a beautiful picture! Can you see the meaning of this? First of all, this is the name by which he will be called, the Lord our righteousness. He is our righteousness. But when he takes his people back to himself in righteousness and when his people again become his bride, then, just as in human marriage custom, the bride takes the name of the bridegroom, the Lord He is our righteousness. But when we're united to him then our name becomes the Lord our righteousness. We are clothed with his righteousness. We're identified with him. He himself becomes our righteousness. We're no longer dependent on our own efforts or struggles. We're no longer held back by our failures and our sins. We've moved into a new relationship with God, a person to person relationship in which the Lord himself is our righteousness and we're so identified with him that as a bride bears the bridegroom's name, so we bear his name, the Lord our righteousness.

Our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Tomorrow I'll be speaking about the seventh covenant name of God, the one who is there [ever present].

Radio Program

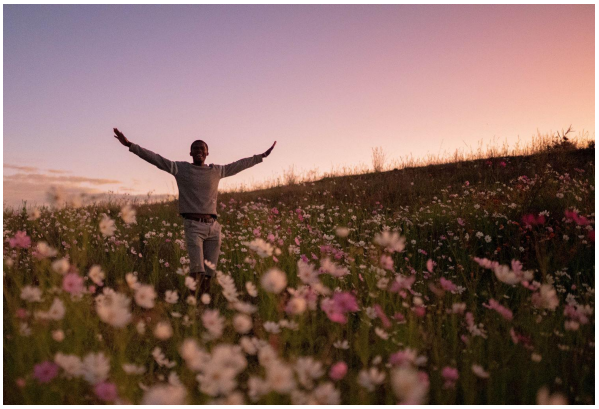
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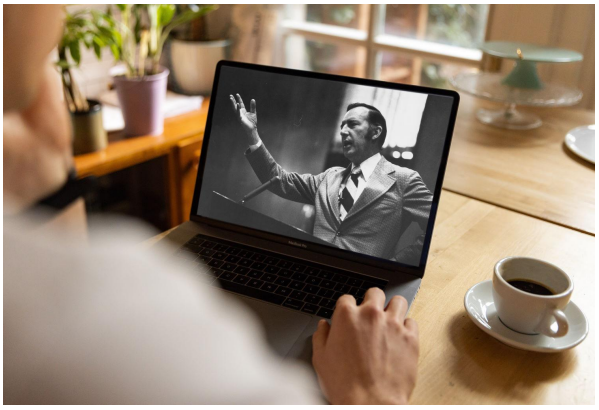
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