



Names of God, XII, From ,

YHWH Tsidkenu (Jehovah our Righteousness): August 18, 2019

When we argue and the other person scores a point, instead of saying, "Oh you're right," we say, "Well you...!" and point out a flaw in their position or their person so the other person can't go after anything wrong with us. We fight for *our* righteousness. Politicians and lawyers do it for a living. But most of us don't like being shown by someone else that we're wrong. Something that I've done too many times; if I can't wiggle out of being wrong, try and get the other person to admit a fault they can't get out of so at least we have equal unrighteousness. I'm saying, "OK, we can get along as long as you admit there are things wrong with you, also." Another tactic, "Maybe I'm wrong but it's not as bad as you, things about you are worse!" Some people argue a point and if shown wrong, after the argument later take the position of the other side and say that was his/her position all along and that he/she never took the position he/she so passionately argued before.

Why do we do this? Why not just say, "I'm wrong, and you are right." To the core of our cells, to our mind's deepest thoughts we need to feel righteous, *but still do what we want*. We all have a conscience and we know we've all violated it. To protect their righteousness some go into overdrive constantly trying to be good, do good, and make good, others just change the rules, some practice denial, and some throw conscience away and accept wrong as right.

In today's world, many influential, vocal, and reported on people say what's right is what one *feels*, even if biology, common sense, and God's word say differently, as in the LGBTQ world. Or some say that say that choice makes it OK to take human life. For those who want to retain the Judeo-Christian foundation of our civilization, the battle is that the values that built our society are still relevant. Those who would label themselves as more progressive are also aggressive over whether a new set of values should take over. The Judeo-Christian world view measures right and wrong from the 10 commandments, makes it clear only God is always right, never wrong and thoughts, choices and feelings must conform to God, not vice-versa. Though I may stand on the Judeo-Christian side of the line I still face a battle within myself between what I accept as true rationally and what my feelings draw me toward. For an honest believer, the battle is not just what is goes on in the world around me but the one inside me as well. It takes me to relinquish my struggle to accept that God is right and I can only be right if I am right with God.



An old acquaintance, Bob Snyder, top notch MD and missionary, founder of International Health Services, met an old college buddy, a Harvard professor of philosophy and declared atheist. They had a deep discussion about right and wrong. Bob asked him, "C'mon, who makes the rules?"

When you're faced with a moral choice and you don't know what to do where do you get your answers?" He was stumped and finally spoke like a young boy, "I remember my childhood and ask, 'What would my mommy do?'" Bob replied, "You're a professor of philosophy, and that's all you got?"



What standard should we use for righteousness? I can say that my wife is 7 foot tall, though she's much shorter than I. I measured her foot with

a piece of paper and then measured her with the standard I set of her own feet and she is by that, 7 feet tall. But a person that saw her who holds to the 12 inch standard, would say I was wrong. Someone made the rule as to what a foot is. By that standard my wife is 5 foot four. So, for morality, justice, and righteousness, who sets the standard?

There is an innate drive in the human soul to be righteous. In conflict, debate, and politics, we want to be right! People pay fortunes to lawyers to be proclaimed righteous. Even the most evil and infamous seek justification. Hitler claimed righteousness for his misdeeds saying Germans needed room to live and Jews were the cause of all the evil on earth. Couldn't he just say, "I want to take land from Czechs and Poles and I hate Jews so I'll kill them?" But even he, a denizen of evil had the righteous monkey on his back.

When we compromise what we know as right for wrong, we justify it: as a victim, for a higher purpose, for religion, for a need that must be met, or that we didn't mean it. But what is really right? Is it from a everyone agreeing? Is it what hurts people and what makes them feel better? How about that each individual can decide for oneself? That's incomplete, for society's consensus deceived generations of civilized peoples to accept slavery and genocide. Some expect government to define righteousness. Really? Since when are politicians the standard of righteousness? If 2 individuals see it differently, who's right? People want to be seen as, and convince themselves that they're righteous. We need an unchangeable definition of righteous and a path to arrive at it.

Israel's king, David accepted God as righteous. ***"The rules of the LORD (YHWH) are true they are righteous altogether"*** (Psalms 19:9). Judeo-Christian roots assume God is always righteous, never wrong. The gospel says human effort is unable to make one righteous. One can often, but never always, live right, do right, and think right .

The 13th name of God in this series, Yahweh Tsidkenu, "The LORD, our righteousness," is from Jeremiah 23:6 and 30:11. This name has a biblical context. Human and God's righteousness are different. One is only declared righteous by God when God becomes one's righteousness.

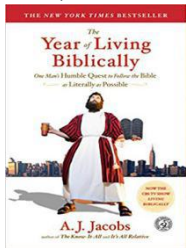
I am the righteousness of God in Christ. It makes me an instrument of God's righteousness. I am a weapon for God's righteousness here on earth. I am declared righteous because of what Christ has done and because I believe it. With that belief I can live by a righteousness that is not my own, but YHWH as my righteousness. That kind of righteousness can't be challenged. I can take that home, to work, to society, to the world.

YHWH must be our source of righteousness.

1 . YHWH our righteousness comes from a real time biblical context.

In Jeremiah chapter 23:1-4, God rebuked the prophets priests, and kings of Israel that led Israel away from God by their debauchery. Because they rejected God for idols, the nation faced devastation from the Babylonians since they turned away from God, the only one who could protect them. But God said He would restore it all and gave a prophecy of Jesus in verses 5-6. ***"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute 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 is our righteousness."*** Jeremiah 33 says the same, with 33:16 citing God's name, *Yahweh Tsidkenu* literally, "Jehovah, Righteousness to us." When Israel abandoned God Himself as their righteousness, they fell into moral confusion, chaos, and

decay. Restoration was not consensus, government, conscience, or behavior determining what is righteous, but God Himself, through the “righteous branch,” a prophecy of Jesus, “The Lord our Righteousness.” A biblical world view sees that any other standard of right and wrong for a person, society, or nation outside of God Himself leads to breakdown. Only He is righteous. Only He can make one righteous, when He does, it’s the real thing. He and only He is our righteousness or we’re lost. Righteousness is part of God’s holy perfection, He’s always right. Sin is wrong, yet all of us have sinned and need a savior, for we’ve fallen way short of His perfect righteousness that the Torah, His law shows us. The path to having YHWH as our righteousness is in Jesus Christ, **“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes”** (Romans 10:4).



A.J. Jacobs tried living by the law of Torah for a year to see if a Jew could be righteous by the law. He came way short. But he made a TV series out of it. He came to where the law of God required stoning Sabbath breakers and adulterers: “Instead, I figured my loophole would be this: the bible doesn’t specify the size of the stones. So...pebbles.

A few days ago, I gathered a handful of small white pebbles from Central Park, which I stuffed in my back pants pocket. Now all I needed were some victims. I decide to start with Sabbath breakers. That’s easy enough to find in this workaholic city. I noticed a pot-bellied guy at the Avis down our block had worked on both Saturday and Sunday. So no matter what, he’s a Sabbath-breaker. Here’s the thing, though: Even with pebbles, it is surprisingly hard to stone people. My plan had been to walk nonchalantly past him and chuck the pebbles at the small of his back. But after a couple of failed passes, I realized it was a bad idea. A chucked pebble, no matter how small, does not go unnoticed.

My revised plan: I would pretend to be clumsy and drop the pebble on his shoe. So I did. And in this way I stoned. But it was probably the most polite stoning in history – I said ‘I’m sorry,’ and then leaned down to pick up the pebble. And he leaned down at the same time, and we almost butted heads, and then he apologized, then I apologized again. Highly unsatisfying.

Today, I get another chance. I am resting in a small public park on the Upper West Side, the kind where you see retirees eating tuna sandwiches on benches. “Hey, you’re dressed queer.” I look over. The speaker is an elderly man, mid-70s I’d guess. He is tall and thin and is wearing of those caps that cabbies wore in movies from the Forties. “You’re dressed queer,” he snarls. “Why you dressed so queer.” I have on my usual fringes, and, for good measure, have worn some sandals and am carrying a knotty maple walking stick I’d bought on the Internet for \$25. “I’m trying to live by the rules of the Bible. The 10 commandments, stoning adulterers...” “You’re stoning adulterers?” “Yeah, I’m stoning adulterers.” “I’m an adulterer.” “You’re currently an adulterer?” “Yeah. Tonight, tomorrow, yesterday, two weeks from now. You gonna stone me?” “If I could, yes, that’d be great.” “I’ll punch you in the face. I’ll send you to the cemetery.” He is serious. This isn’t a cutesy grumpy old man. This is an angry old man. This is a man with seven decades of hostility behind him. I fish out my pebbles from my back pocket. “I wouldn’t stone you with big stones,” I say. “Just these little guys.” I open my palm to show him the pebbles. He lunges at me, grabbing one out of my hand, then chucking it at my face. It whizzes by my cheek. I am stunned for a second.

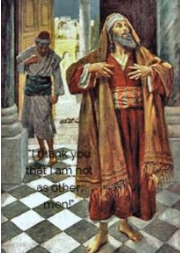
I hadn't expected this elderly man to make the first move. But now there is nothing stopping me from retaliating. An eye for an eye. I take one of the remaining pebbles and whip it at his chest. It bounces off. "I'll punch you right in the kisser," he says. "Well, you really shouldn't commit adultery," I say. We stare at each other. My heart is racing. Yes, he is a septuagenarian. Yes, he had just threatened me using corny Honeymooners dialogue. But you could tell: This man has a strong dark side. Our glaring contest lasts ten seconds, then he walks away, brushing by me as he leaves." A.J. Jacobs' experience shows that righteousness by human effort is a joke!

2 . Self Righteousness is a dead end.

In Jesus' time, religion was really big for the Jewish leaders.



Saducees were priests, upper class, and considered themselves righteous by birth into the Levite tribe and the clan of Cohen or descendants of Aaron the high priest. They were rich.



The Pharisees, lawyers, and scribes Jesus spoke of weren't Harvard grads with law degrees, but studied, copied, and interpreted the Torah. They started a century and a half before Christ as a movement that rebelled against corruption in the priesthood and led the common people to return to the word of God. As time progressed they also became corrupt and put on shows of pompous and flamboyant piety while stealing from widows (Matthew 6:1-18, also chapter 23).

Their public righteousness came from a tradition called *Tzedekah*, or "righteousness," not to be confused with modern Jews who use *Tzedekah* to describe charitable giving. But the Pharisees' *Tzedekah* was their game, to show that they were the most righteous in the nation. They'd blow a trumpet when they'd give money to the temple, pray long and loud prayers in public, and to show they fasted, act gloomy and disfigure their faces. It seems they were proud of their humility! Jesus had strong words for them, "**Woe to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites!... You serpents, you brood of vipers, how are you to escape being sentenced to hell?**" (Matthew 23:29, 33) Jesus said, "**Beware of practicing your righteousness (Tzedekah) before other people to be seen by them**" (Matthew 6:1). They didn't meet His standard, "**For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven**" (Matthew 5:20). God's standard for righteousness is perfection, "**You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect**" (Matthew 5:48). "**None is righteous, no not one**" (Romans 3:10).

3 . Doing righteous things in this life may be rewarded on earth. But only faith in Jesus brings perfect righteousness toward eternal life.

There are people that do really righteous things, most of the time, and are rewarded and blessed on earth for doing the right thing. The Book of Proverbs promises longer life "**righteousness delivers from death**" (10:2), well being and respect "**Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor**" (Proverbs 12:21), protection "**righteousness guards him whose way is blameless**" (Proverbs 13:6), and the ability to withstand difficult times for those who habitually do righteous things in family, business, and relationships, "**the righteous is delivered from trouble**" (Proverbs

11:8). Integrity, honesty, avoiding destructive behaviors have inherent rewards *in this life*, aligning with God's standards, even to the next generation ***"The righteous who walks in his integrity-- blessed are his children after him!"*** (Proverbs 20:7). It even helps a country do well, ***"Righteousness exalts a nation"*** (Proverbs 14:34). They even are kind to animals, ***"The righteous has regard for the life of his beast"*** (Proverbs 12:10).

But down to earth righteousness doesn't achieve the righteousness that God requires for a person to enter heaven. Trying to be good isn't spiritual righteousness that brings us to God, will not get one declared not guilty before His judgment seat. However, one who knows God *will follow* the path of righteousness.

But the righteousness monkey still hangs onto our backs. In the human quest for righteousness one can: a) accept unrighteousness and give up trying, b) try to have righteousness by working for it, c) hold to the popular opinion, d) do religion, e) be a victim let off the hook for wrongdoing, f) or accept God's righteousness as His gift that comes by believing- in His Son. The preferable way is to align oneself with God's holy righteousness and ask, "what should I do since I don't have a chance?" Then only He who is Holy, righteous, and powerful can save us and make us righteous- by an act of God. Jesus qualifies. He is God. He is holy, righteous, and powerful. But the penalty of sin is death- the righteous sentence. So one who has the qualifications to save (holy and righteous) must be willing to die and absorb the cleansing wrath of God as a substitute for unrighteous sinners. That's why Jesus became human- to go to the death, absorb our sin, and conquer the grave.

To bring you and I to God's righteousness, it was Jesus' part to die and rise from the dead, it is every person's part to believe in, ***"the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction"*** (Romans 3:22). It started in the Old Testament, Abraham got it, ***"Then he believed in the LORD; (YHWH) and He reckoned it to him as righteousness"*** (Genesis 15:6). But it isn't a one time thing. Repeatedly the Bible says, ***"The righteous shall live by his faith"*** (Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, Hebrews 10:38).



In the film, *The Unforgiven*, Clint Eastwood's character said to a self righteous sheriff (played by Gen Hackman), "It's not about deservin,'" and he was right, it's about believing. Real forever righteousness comes when we trust *YHWH Tsidkenu*, Jehovah our righteousness. That's His name and He loves us and wants us to share in His righteousness so he gives it as a gift to those who believe.



In the Antarctic summer of 1908-9, Sir Ernest Shackleton and three companions wanted to reach to the South Pole. They set off with four ponies. Weeks later, ponies dead, rations all but exhausted, they turned back, 127 days in all. In [The Heart of the Antarctic](#), they talked about food -- elaborate feasts, gourmet delights, sumptuous menus, yet suffering from dysentery. They hungered to the point of obsession.

Jesus said, ***"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled"*** (Matthew 5:6). Shackleton's party's obsession with food is a glimpse of passion Jesus wants us to have for God's righteousness. We already have an innate

passion to be right, so we have to direct it toward YHWH and to be right with God. This is the test for all of us: Do we long to have God's holy righteousness as our own, or are we just ok with how things are in our soul? Scripture says, ***"If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation."*** (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is when we long to be righteous with God, not be just be right instead of wrong, or keep up appearances. Then it's possible to understand the work of the cross to become a new creation: ***"For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"*** (2 Corinthians 5:21). When God declares the unrighteous righteous, He's not winking at sin, turning His head, closing His eyes, pretending it didn't happen, He is satisfied with the payment that Jesus made, giving His righteous life in exchange for the sinner's unrighteous condition. As a reward for what His Son accomplished, He declares the unrighteous, "Not Guilty!" or righteous. That is called imputed (assigned, entered into the account, credited) as opposed to earned righteousness. Accept Christ's righteousness, and then do what is right, stand for what is right, and especially to your children and others teach the difference between right and wrong. It is a natural consequence for those who have found Jesus as *YHWH Tsidkenu*, or Jehovah our righteousness. When God introduces Himself by that name to the one on an honest quest for rightness, one could say with relief, "You're the one I've been looking for!"

Takeaways: God is righteous, we are not. His standard is the measurement. We fail. Jesus is righteous. Become righteous by becoming a follower of Christ, righteousness by faith. Self righteousness is empty at best, ludicrous and futile. If you have any notion that anything you're doing will make God love you more or less, impossible. Our goodness is a dead end. Stop measuring yourself and others by it. That doesn't mean don't have integrity, live right, and do right. One who is really righteous by faith is attracted to righteousness and it will show.

Hi I am Gods by title, One, though Three, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. My name is YHWH, the letters of my name say, "A Hand, look! A nail, look!" I am Jireh, I provide for you to do what I ask you to. I am Ropheyka, the healer of you all. I am Nissi, your banner of identity. I am Sabaoth, my armies are with you to fight your battles. I'm Makkadeshkem who makes you all holy. I am Dad. I am Roi, your shepherd. I am Shalom, who comes to you in peace. I am Shammah who is always there, everywhere. I am Tsidkenu of David, you can say, "Jesus our righteousness."