

Names of God, Pt 10 - Jehovah Tsidkenu

Names of God Series

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This evening in our review of the names of God, I would like to give you the list of the meanings of the names of God and ask you to help me with the Hebrew name as we have learned it. And so we will give you the liberty just to call out from where you are sitting.

The name, the Hebrew name of God that means eternal, triune, creator. Somebody help me. **אלהים** (el-o-heem'), very good.

The self existing one. **יהוה** (yeh-ho-vaw').

God almighty. **אל שרי** (ale shad-dah' - ee).

Lord or master. **רענסי** (ad-o-noy').

The God who sees or the God who provides. **יהוה יראה** (yeh-ho-vaw' yir-eh').

The God who heals. **יהוה רפא** (yeh-ho-vaw' raw-faw'), good.

God our peace. **יהוה שלום** (yeh-ho-vaw' shaw-lome').

God who is there or the God who is here. **יהוה שמה** (yeh-ho-vaw' shawm' - maw).

God our banner. **יהוה ניס** (yeh-ho-vaw' nis-see'), very good.

Of course, the premise for our series is that God has progressively revealed himself to his people by introducing himself with and identifying himself by different names at different times. God's names were given to man by God himself during specific times of man's need so that we might know that God is our all in all.

This evening the name that we are going to explore is **יהוה צדק** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay'-noo) and the name **יהוה צדק** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay'-noo) means ... anyone? God our righteousness. And we learn of **יהוה צדק** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay'-noo) in Jeremiah

chapter number 23. And I invite you to find that in your Bibles, Jeremiah chapter number 23.

As you are turning, allow me to establish the context for you. After the reigns of King Saul, King David and King Solomon, the united kingdom of Israel split or divided into two kingdoms. The 10 northern tribes were called Israel. The 10 southern tribes were called Judah and each kingdom had their own respected kings. Some were good and some were bad.

The chart here on the screen before you lists the kings of Judah. And perhaps you can see those that list of those kings. This chart lists the kings of Israel.

But what I want you to notice about each of these lists is the practice of each king as designated this way. The kings of Judah, some did evil, some did right. Or the kings of Israel, some did evil and, well, one of them, maybe a mixed bag there of his practice. And the colors identify each king as being either righteous or unrighteous. That is they did right or they did evil in the sight of the Lord. And in a real sense Proverbs 14:34 is true.

“Righteousness exalts a nation, But sin is a reproach to any people.”¹

And when the righteous ruled and reigned in the land, the people prospered. When the unrighteous ruled and reigned in the land, the people suffered.

Now, the prophet Jeremiah, you are in Jeremiah chapter 23, the prophet Jeremiah began his ministry during the reign of the good king of Judah, Josiah. If you can find it there in the screen I will highlight it for you. Josiah. Josiah had instituted sweeping reforms and Judah experienced a spiritual revival, but Josiah’s successors reversed that direction and were an abomination in the sight of the Lord. They did evil. They were wicked and, consequently, conditions in Judah became terrible. The priests and the princes and the people polluted the temple in Jerusalem. They practiced every evil heathen practice that you could imagine and the land was full of violence and corruption so that in 2 Kings 23 God said:

““I will also remove Judah from My sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, ‘My name shall be there.’”²

So that just as the 10 northern tribes of Israel had fallen to the Assyrians in 722, so also now the southern two tribes of Judah would fall to the Babylonians in 586.

And Jeremiah is the prophet. He was the voice piece for God that predicted the captivity of Judah by the Babylonians as the instrument of God’s judgment. And that was Jeremiah’s ministry. That was his message. The heartbroken prophet Jeremiah had a heart breaking message and it was a message of doom for Judah and for Jerusalem.

¹ Proverbs 14:34.

² 2 Kings 23:27.

But, you say, well, didn't God promise to establish David's throne forever? Yes. We call it the Davidic covenant.

2 Samuel seven, God promised David and your house and your kingdom, David, shall be established forever before you. Your throne shall be established forever.

So Jeremiah also predicted the subsequent return from captivity. But more than a return to the land, Jeremiah prophesied that God would raise up to David a righteous branch, ok? All of this is background, perhaps, rehearsed and familiar to you. But look at Jeremiah 23. We pick up in verse five.

"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."³

Or, in your Hebrew Bibles, וַיְהוָה וַיְהוָה (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo) as it is here on the screen.

Now before we examine this name of God, וַיְהוָה וַיְהוָה (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo), or God our righteousness, this King of kings and this Lord of lords, I want us to go back and I want us to look again at the list of the kings of Judah. Specifically I want you to focus on that last and final king of Judah, if you can see it there on the screen. It is the name Zedekiah. And I want to compare and contrast the name Zedekiah with the name וַיְהוָה וַיְהוָה (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo).

Quick Hebrew lesson for you here. And, well, here is the comparison between the two names. Quick Hebrew lesson. Every Hebrew word is built on a trilateral root. That means there are three core letters to every Hebrew word. And as I put the Hebrew names on the screen here I want to highlight for you the trilateral root, the three name letters of each name, the three letters that are shared in these two names and I highlight them there.

Reading from right to left you see a character that looks like a funny Y. Do you see that there? It is the Hebrew letter tsaday. Next to it moving from right to left you see an upside down and inverted L. Do you see that? That is the Hebrew letter dahleth. And then you see a big P. Do you see that big P? That is the Hebrew letter qoph.

And those three letters, that trilateral root, the core for both of those names is the same. And you need to remember those three Hebrew letters because we are going to see them again in a few minutes.

³ Jeremiah 23:5-6.

Both the name Zedekiah and the name tsidkenu share the trilateral root meaning of righteousness so that you have got to follow me. This is very exciting.

Zedekiah means righteousness of Jehovah. And tsidkenu means Jehovah our righteousness.

You say, “Now, pastor Matt, is this a Hebrew lesson or is this a Bible study? Is this a seminary classroom or is this our Wednesday evening pick me up shot in the arm devotional?”

Well, now follow this. King Zedekiah’s name, ok, King Zedekiah was the last king of Judah before it fell to the Babylonians. King Zedekiah’s name had not always been King Zedekiah. Originally King Zedekiah’s name was King Mattaniah which means gift of Jehovah. In fact, my name, Matt, or Matthew means gift of God. So King Mattaniah meant gift of Jehovah or gift of God. But when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem and conquered Judah, King Nebuchadnezzar changed King Mattaniah’s name to King Zedekiah which means righteousness of Jehovah. And Nebuchadnezzar renamed the king.

Now why did King Nebuchadnezzar in the conquest of Jerusalem, in the conquest of Judah give King Zedekiah a new name or King Mattaniah a new name, King Zedekiah?

I have a couple of suggestions for you. One, it may have been Nebuchadnezzar’s mockery of Judah and Judah’s God. See, how your righteous God treats you? How nice of your righteous God to let you suffer at the hand of the Babylonians? How righteous of your God to allow you to be taken captive by your enemies? Ha, ha, ha. What a righteous God you have.

Or, perhaps, King Nebuchadnezzar might have been looking to justify his conquest of Judah saying, “Wee how your God is using me to judge you, Judah? If your God is so righteous, then I am doing what must be ok with him. You deserve what I have done to you. It is righteous what I am doing to you.”

And so you say, “Well, what is the point? I thought we were studying the names of God, not the names of Judah’s king.”

Allow me this summary statement. It is probable and it is probably during the reign of King Mattaniah or King Zedekiah, as he was renamed that Jeremiah’s prophecy of **צדק יהוה** (ye-ho-vaw’ tsid-kay’- noo) was given. During the time in which Nebuchadnezzar sarcastically renamed the last king to sit on David’s throne, righteousness of Jehovah, God spoke through Jeremiah and promised another king whose name would be Jehovah our righteousness.

Do you see the play on the words there?

And so when Nebuchadnezzar conquers Jerusalem and Judah and says, “I am going to rename your king,” it is not King Mattaniah anymore, gift of God. It is now going to be called righteousness of God, ha, ha.

Jeremiah then arrives with God’s message and says, “Don’t worry people, because some day God will raise up another king and we are going to call him Jehovah our righteousness.”

And as devastating as Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry was, it was also profoundly promising. It was promising to the people because the throne of David would endure and the next king would be a righteous king.

And, folks, when you are suffering the injustices of life and when life has always seemed fair to you, you need to be reminded that God is a righteous God. Even when things aren’t going your way, don’t seem fair, when you have been given the short end of the stick or been dealt a bad hand as we might say, God is, yes, righteous and, of course, I would cross reference Romans chapter nine where Paul asked the rhetorical question:

“Is there unrighteousness with God?”⁴

When we don’t understand his justice? Absolutely not.

Let me quickly remind you that God is righteous.

Psalm 129 verse four.

“The LORD is righteous.”⁵

Do you notice those Hebrew letters there? Do you see the funny looking Y and that upside down inverted L and that big P? That is tsadik.

Deuteronomy 32:4.

“For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.”⁶

And you see those Hebrew letters there again, the righteousness of God.

How about Psalm 119 verse 142.

“Your righteousness is an everlasting righteousness.”⁷

⁴ Romans 9:14.

⁵ Psalm 129:4.

⁶ Deuteronomy 32:4.

⁷ Psalm 119:142.

You see the three Hebrew letters there again.

Psalm 89 verse 14, also 97 verse two.

“Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne.”⁸

And you see the Hebrew, the tsadiq there, the righteousness again. God is a righteous God. God is **יְהוָה יִשְׁקֵט** (ye-ho-vaw’ tsid-kay’ - noo). And even if your home is ransacked by the enemy and you are hauled away from what is safe and familiar to you and you are suffering the injustice at the hand of the wicked, wicked people, be reminded that God is righteous.

Now among the ancients the notion of righteousness was represented by a balance scale. And we are familiar with lady justice who holds the balance scale in her hand and the analogy and the image is of one correctly measuring or weighing one thing against another. And, in fact, Prophets 11:1 says:

“A false balance is abomination to the LORD: but a just weight is his delight.”⁹

Why? Because God is a righteous God and unrighteousness violates his very character. And for all of human history man has used this image to determine his own righteousness beginning with Job.

“Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity,”¹⁰ he said in Job 31.

And many people view God as weighing their good deeds against their bad and anyone who embraces a gospel of good works is hoping, right, that their good works will outweigh their bad works so that when the judgment day comes, the scales will tip in their favor. The problem is that man is not basically good. Man is bad. Let me remind you of man’s unrighteousness.

Psalm 51 verse five.

“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.”¹¹

Psalm 14.

The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside,

⁸ Psalm 89:14.

⁹ Proverbs 11:1.

¹⁰ Job 31:6.

¹¹ Psalm 51:5.

They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.¹²

Another place, Deuteronomy nine verses four to six.

“Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land’; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out from before you. It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land.”¹³

Deuteronomy seven explains that God did not set his love on Israel nor choose Israel because they were bigger or better than the other peoples. The truth of the matter is that they were the least of the people and there in Deuteronomy seven the Bible explains that God chose unrighteous Israel to make them a holy people to God.

But how does that work out? How is it that unrighteous man can be made holy? How is it that unrighteous man can be made right with God? And that is the constant pursuit of the orthodox Jew or any other religious person who is seeking their own righteousness.

Now, the spiritually minded in the Old Testament clearly understand that the punishment or penalty of one’s sin must be applied to an innocent substitute and the innocences of that substitute be applied to the sinner.

I call this the great exchange, the flip flop, the transfer. The proper theological designation is the substitutionary atonement. And that is what Jesus Christ was for us, the Lamb of God, the perfect righteous Lamb of God and his righteousness was transferred to us as our sin was transferred to him. Another theological word is imputation there.

2 Corinthians 5:21 says:

“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”¹⁴

1 Peter 3:18.

“For Christ also suffered once for sins...”¹⁵

The American Standard Version says, “The righteous for the unrighteous.”

Jesus for us.

Romans 10:4 says:

¹² Psalm 14:2-3.

¹³ Deuteronomy 9:4-5.

¹⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:21.

¹⁵ 1 Peter 3:18.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”¹⁶

And so here are the lesson for us. The lessons, first, God revealed himself to his people though the prophet Jeremiah in the name **וְיְהוָה צְדָקָה** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo) when Judah was suffering the injustice or the unrighteousness of wicked King Nebuchadnezzar and their captivity in Babylon.

Judah's own king, King Mattaniah's name had been changed to King Zedekiah in a mockery of God. And so God assured Judah that another king would come and be named **וְיְהוָה צְדָקָה** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo) so that even when we suffer perceived injustices in life, we can know that God is a righteous God.

You see, I think, in fact, in Jeremiah's prophecy would have been a great message of hope for Judah. There is another king coming, Jehovah, our righteousness.

And, second and ultimately, we need to know that the revelation of God as **וְיְהוָה צְדָקָה** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo) was nothing short, in Jeremiah 23, was nothing short of a prophetic reference to Jesus Christ who is the righteous substitute for our unrighteousness.

Does all that makes sense? I think it is profound and it is insight that perhaps you had never noticed before. And we have the opportunity when we go to the Lord in prayer and petition, in praise to address our God as Jehovah our righteousness, or God our righteousness.

*Father God, we address you this evening as our **וְיְהוָה צְדָקָה** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo) God our righteousness. And, Lord, in a practical way we suffer injustices every day, perceived unrighteousnesses against us that violate us, that hurt us. God, may we be mindful that you are the King of kings and the Lord of lords, that you are **וְיְהוָה צְדָקָה** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo) and then, Lord, in a greater way, we understand that your Son Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy and there on the cross of Calvary he shed his blood as the perfect substitute, exchanging his righteousness for our unrighteousness. And, oh dear God, we thank you so much for that. We are grateful that **וְיְהוָה צְדָקָה** (ye-ho-vaw' tsid-kay' - noo) is all things to us. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

¹⁶ Romans 10:4.