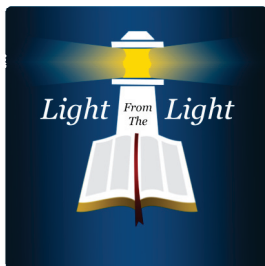


Are You Right with God?

Robert Dean, Jr.





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watch Dr. Dean on his
Light From the Light YouTube channel.



Are You Right With God?

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In the biblical book of Job, perhaps the oldest book of the Bible, the question is asked, “Can a man be righteous [Heb. צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*] with God?” (Job 9:2). Don’t you think that is an important question? Yes, it is the most important question we should ask ourselves. Can we know if we are right with God? Did God tell us how to be right with Him? Again, the answer to both of those questions is yes because God has told us in His Word, the Bible.

Then, how can I, you, or anyone be right with God? He told us from the very beginning why we cannot be right or righteous on our own. Much of this has been known for centuries for they were revealed in the earliest books of the Bible written in the Hebrew Scriptures over 3,500 years ago. This Hebrew word for “righteous,” will tell us what we want to know. Below are nine important points, along with twelve messianic prophecies, from the Hebrew Scriptures that will answer the above questions.

This booklet shows the emphasis on “righteousness” throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. In many

translations the Hebrew word *tzedakah*, which may mean “just,” or “righteous,” is sometimes obscured by other translations. Where necessary, the verses have been translated to reflect *righteousness* or *righteous* as the best translation to reflect the wording of *tzedakah* or its cognate in the original Hebrew. This clarification helps us see what God requires of us is righteousness, and the question becomes, “How can we possess a righteousness, which measures up to God’s own righteousness, He will accept?”

1. God created each of us to have a personal relationship with Him.
 - a. He created us “in His image and likeness” in order that we might have a personal, intimate relationship with Him. This separates human beings from all other life forms. God intentionally created human beings to be a finite representative of Himself, fully capable of knowing Him, able to communicate, learn, and have a relationship with Him.

Genesis 1:27, And God created man in His image, in the image of God He

created him; male and female He created them. (*Tanakh*, 1985) ¹

- b. God is defined throughout the Hebrew Scriptures as the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and all that is in them, especially Israel!

Genesis 1:1, IN THE beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (JPS 1917)

Exodus 20:11, For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 43:15, I am your Holy One, the Lord, Your King, the Creator of Israel. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 45:12, It was I who made the earth And created man upon it; My own hands stretched out the heavens, And I marshaled all their host. (*Tanakh*)

¹ All Scripture is taken from the Jewish Publication Society, 1985 *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society (JPS). This is designated as (*Tanakh*). A few times the JPS 1917 *Tanakh* translation is preferred where it uses the word “righteousness” reflecting the original Hebrew, but the 1985 *Tanakh* chose a different translation.

Isaiah 45:18, For thus said the Lord, The Creator of heaven who alone is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who alone established it—He did not create it a waste, But formed it for habitation: I am the Lord, and there is none else. (*Tanakh*)

- c. God wants us to know Him personally, He desires a personal relationship with the human beings He created. He has a plan for human beings to have this personal relationship with Him.

Jeremiah 24:7, And I will give them the understanding to acknowledge Me, for I am the Lord. And they shall be My people and I will be their God, when they turn back to Me with all their heart. (*Tanakh*)

- d. God is perfect righteousness, not just more moral, but the very standard of all that is right and just. God's righteous standard is asserted again and again through the writings of the Hebrew prophets.

Psalms 11:7, For the Lord is righteous [Heb. צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*]; He loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold His face. (*Tanakh*)

Psalms 71:19, Thy righteousness [Heb. צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*] also, O God, which reacheth unto high heaven; Thou who hast done great things, O God, who is like unto Thee? (JPS 1917)

Numbers 23:19, God is not man to be capricious, Or mortal to change His mind. Would He speak and not act, Promise and not fulfill? (*Tanakh*)

Psalms 119:142, Thy righteousness [צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*] is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is the truth. (JPS 1917)

2. God cannot have a personal relationship with us after Adam's sin, because we are sinful and separated from Him. No one is righteous.
 - a. We are all sinful.

Genesis 6:5, The Lord saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time. (*Tanakh*)

Ecclesiastes 7:20, For there is not one good [צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*] man on earth who does what is best [good] and doesn't err. (*Tanakh*)

Psalms 14:2, The LORD looks down from heaven on mankind to find a man of understanding, a man mindful of God.

Psalms 14:3, All have turned bad, altogether foul; there is none who does good, not even one. (*Tanakh*)

Psalms 143:2, Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for before You no creature is in the right [קִדְּוָה, *ṣādēq* “righteous”]. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 64:5, And we are all become as one that is unclean, and all our righteousnesses [תְּזַדְּאָה, *tzedaqah*] are as a polluted garment; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. (JPS 1917)

- b. The consequence for our sin is death, which is separation from God. Spiritual death eventually results in physical death Adam did not die physically for another 930 years.

Genesis 2:17, but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die.” (*Tanakh*)

Genesis 3:24, He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life. (*Tanakh*)

Ezekiel 18:20, The person who sins, he alone shall die. A child shall not share the burden of a parent's guilt, nor shall a parent share the burden of a child's guilt; the righteousness [תְּצַדִּיק, *tzedaqah*] of the righteous shall be accounted to him alone, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be accounted to him alone. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 59:2, But your iniquities have been a barrier Between you and your God, Your sins have made Him turn His face away And refuse to hear you. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 59:3, For your hands are defiled with crime And your fingers with iniquity. Your lips speak falsehood, Your tongue utters treachery. (*Tanakh*)

3. God does not accept our own efforts of good works to remove our sin.

Isaiah 64:5, And we are ALL become as one that is unclean, and ALL our righteousnesses

[צִדְקָה, *tzedakah*] are as a polluted garment; and we ALL do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. (JPS 1917)²

Jeremiah 2:22, Though you wash with natron
And use much lye, Your guilt is ingrained
before Me—declares the Lord GOD. (*Tanakh*)

Even our good deeds, our best *righteousness*, is filthy before a righteous God.

4. God loves us and He Himself provided the way for our sins to be removed.
 - a. God loves us with an infinite love.

Jeremiah 31:3, The LORD revealed Himself to me of old. Eternal love I conceived for you then; Therefore I continue My grace to you. (*Tanakh*)

- b. God Himself provided the way for our sins to be removed.

Isaiah 43:25, It is I, I who—for My own sake—Wipe your transgressions away And remember your sins no more. (*Tanakh*)

5. God's provision required a death, a blood sacrifice. These sacrifices pictured the future

² Emphasis added

provision from the time of Adam and Eve, through the time of Noah, and incorporated in the *Torah*, the Law of Moses.

Leviticus 17:11, For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have assigned it to you for making expiation for your lives upon the altar; it is the blood, as life, that effects expiation. (*Tanakh*)

6. Animal sacrifices provided a visual image, only a temporary atonement (cleansing) for our sin. Thus, animal sacrifices were substitutes for the one bringing the sacrifice. The act of putting his hand on the sacrifice symbolized the transfer of sin from the worshipper to the animal. But these sacrifices were temporary images, requiring an annual repetition on the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*). The sacrifices were designed by God to picture the need for a substitute for the sinner, one that would provide a permanent payment of the sin penalty for all.

Genesis 22:13, And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram, and offered

him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. (JPS 1917)

Genesis 22:14, And Abraham called the name of that place *Adonai-jireh*; as it is said to this day: 'In the mount where the Lord is seen.' (JPS 1917)

Leviticus 16:34, This shall be to you a law for all time: to make atonement for the Israelites for all their sins once a year. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 53:6, We all went astray like sheep, Each going his own way; And the LORD visited upon him The guilt of all of us. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 53:7, He was maltreated, yet he was submissive, He did not open his mouth; Like a sheep being led to slaughter, Like a ewe, dumb before those who shear her, He did not open his mouth. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 53:10, But the LORD chose to crush him by disease, That, if he made himself an offering for guilt, He might see offspring and have long life, And that through him the LORD's purpose might prosper. (*Tanakh*)

In Isaiah 53 the suffering Servant gives His life for Israel. He (an individual) bore “their” (the people’s) iniquities (53:12 see below) and bore “the sin of many” who are identified as “the transgressors” (*Tanakh*, JPS, 1985). Thus the Servant here must be an individual, not the nation, nor the people, for this one dies for the people, a permanent substitute the nation.

7. God provided a permanent removal of our sin through the promised Messiah who dies as a substitute sacrifice for the sins of the world.
 - a. The Messiah dies in our place.

Isaiah 53:4, Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, Our suffering that he endured. We accounted him plagued, Smitten and afflicted *by God*; (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 53:5, But he was wounded because of our sins, Crushed because of our iniquities. He bore the chastisement that made us whole, And by his bruises we were healed. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 53:6, We all went astray like sheep, Each going his own way; And the LORD visited upon him The guilt of all of us. (*Tanakh*)

b. The Messiah rose from the dead.

Isaiah 53:10, But the LORD chose to crush him by disease, That, if he made himself an offering for guilt, He might see offspring and have long life, And that through him the LORD's purpose might prosper. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 53:12, Assuredly, I will give him the many as his portion, He shall receive the multitude as his spoil. For he exposed himself to death And was numbered among the sinners, Whereas he bore the guilt of the many And made intercession for sinners. (*Tanakh*)

Psalms 16:10, For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. (*Tanakh*)

Psalms 16:10, written by King David around 1000 BC, could not have referred to David because he died and was buried and his tomb's location was known for centuries thereafter.

8. All of our righteousnesses [תְּזַדְּאָקוֹתַי, *tzedaqah*] are as “polluted garments” (Isaiah 64:6 [64:5 in *Tanakh*]) and we are all sinners, separated by

our sins from God. So how does anyone obtain righteousness that God accepts?

- a. As with Abraham, God declares us righteous when we believe in His promise and provision of salvation.

Genesis 15:6, And he [Abraham] believed in the Lord; and He counted [imputed, credited] it to him for righteousness [תְּדָאָה, *tzedaqah*]. (JPS 1917)

Habakkuk 2:4, Behold, his soul is puffed up, it is not upright in him; but the righteous [צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*] shall live by his faith. (JPS 1917)

Isaiah 53:10, But the LORD chose to crush him by disease [the suffering Servant], That, he made himself [the Servant] an offering for guilt, He might see offspring and have long life, And that through him the LORD's purpose might prosper. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 53:11, Out of his anguish he shall see it; He shall enjoy it to the full through his devotion. My righteous [תְּדָאָה, *tzedaqah*] servant makes the many righteous [צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*], It is their punishment

that he bears; (*Tanakh*) (See point 9 below.)

- b. As with Moses and David, God wants us to listen to this Prophet and believe in the Messiah.

Deuteronomy 18:15, The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet from among your own people, like myself; him you shall heed. (*Tanakh*)

Psalms 2:7, Let me tell of the decree: the LORD said to me, “You are My son, I have fathered you this day.” (*Tanakh*)

Psalms 2:12, pay homage in good faith, lest He be angered, and your way be doomed in the mere flash of His anger. Happy are all who take refuge in Him. (*Tanakh*)

9. These verses demonstrate that all our good deeds, generous efforts, and charitable gifts can never measure up to the standard of God’s righteousness. However, the Hebrew Scriptures also promised a future prophet, a unique servant of God, who would come to bear in His own body our sins in order to provide righteousness, “to make many righteous” (Isaiah 53:11). Only One

who is perfectly righteous Himself can bear the sin of those who are not righteous. This is what the prophet Isaiah declared. This was exemplified centuries earlier when Abraham believed in God and God “counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). The promise Abraham believed was that God would be true to His promise in Genesis 3:15 to provide a descendant who would defeat Satan and bear the penalty of sin for the world. But like Abraham, we must believe this promise to be credited with God’s righteousness.

12 Important Messianic Prophecies

The Messiah who fulfilled these prophecies is *Yeshua* (Jesus) of Nazareth, who fulfilled many more than one hundred Messianic prophecies in the Hebrew Bible. No one had ever claimed to be Messiah before *Yeshua*. Here are only twelve of these prophecies along with the mathematical probability of only eight of them coming true in one future individual. Yet over one hundred have been shown to have been fulfilled in Him.

1. The Messiah will be fully human. He is identified by the phrase: the “Seed” of the woman. “Seed” describes a descendant and is normally associated with the male reproductive system. This catches our attention because it is attributed to the woman.

From Genesis 5 through 2 Chronicles, these genealogies trace the line of the “seed” of the woman for the purpose of identifying the Messiah. In these verses it is important to notice that in the Hebrew text an important point in the original Masoretic text reads “he” or “him,” which is a singular pronoun, not “they” or “their,” a plural pronoun.

Genesis 3:15, I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your offspring and hers; They [Hebrew text has a third person masculine singular suffix, “**he**”] shall strike at your head, And you shall strike at their [Hebrew text has a third person masculine singular suffix, “**his**”] heel. (*Tanakh*)

2. The Messiah will be the “seed” descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Genesis 12:3, I [*Adonai*] will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. (*Tanakh*)

Genesis 22:17, blessing I [*Adonai*] will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendant shall possess the gate of His enemies. [Hebrew text has the third person masculine singular suffix, “**his**,” which makes this a Messianic promise.] (*Tanakh*)

Genesis 22:18, In your descendant all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice. (*Tanakh*)

Genesis 22:17, I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendant shall seize the gates of their foes. [Hebrew text has a third person masculine singular suffix, “his,” therefore the reference is to one specific descendant.] (*Tanakh*)

3. The Messiah will be the “seed” descended from the tribe of Judah.

Genesis 49:10, The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet; So that tribute shall come to him And the homage of peoples be his. (*Tanakh*)

4. The Messiah will be the “seed” descended through the line of King David.

Jeremiah 23:5, See, a time is coming—declares the LORD—when I will raise up a true branch of David’s line. He shall reign as king and shall prosper, and he shall do what is just and right in the land. (*Tanakh*)

Jeremiah 23:6, In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called,

The Lord is our righteousness [Heb. צַדִּיק, *tzaddiq*]. (JPS 1917)

5. The Messiah will be born of a virgin. Though debate still swirls around the use of the Hebrew word *almah* as “virgin,” it is clear that the Rabbis who translated the Hebrew text into Greek in the *Septuagint* over two hundred years *before* Jesus’s birth, used *parthenos* (Greek for “virgin”) as the best translation. They understood that in this context *almah* clearly meant “virgin.” When the New Testament quotes this verse it does so from the older, pre-Christian *Septuagint*.

Isaiah 7:14, Assuredly, my Lord will give you a sign of His own accord! Look, the young woman [virgin] is with child and about to give birth to a son. Let her name him Immanuel. (*Tanakh*)

6. The Messiah’s time of arrival is precisely given. Daniel 9:25, 26 speaks of the time of seven “weeks” or “periods of seven” (forty-nine years) plus sixty-two periods of seven. This calculates to 173,880 days—beginning with the decree from Artaxerxes to Nehemiah on March 5, 444 BC to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. The

end of that time was the day Jesus entered Jerusalem according to the lunar calendar used in those times.

Daniel 9:26, And **after** those sixty-two weeks, the anointed one [*Meshiach*] will disappear and vanish. The army of a leader who is to come will destroy the city and the sanctuary, but its end will come through a flood. Desolation is decreed until the end of war. (*Tanakh*)

7. What will Messiah accomplish? He is a substitute sacrifice for our sins.

Isaiah 53:4, Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing, Our suffering that he endured. We accounted him plagued, Smitten and afflicted by God; (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 53:5, But he was wounded **because of** our sins, Crushed **because of** our iniquities. **He bore the chastisement that made us whole**, And **by his bruises we were healed**. (*Tanakh*) [emphasis added]

Isaiah 53:6, We all went astray like sheep, Each going his own way; And the LORD **visited upon him The guilt of all of us.** (*Tanakh*) [emphasis added]

Isaiah 53:10, But the LORD chose to crush him by disease [the suffering Servant], That, he **made himself [the Servant] an offering for guilt**, He might see offspring and have long life, And that through him the LORD's purpose might prosper. (*Tanakh*) [emphasis added]

8. He will be rejected by His people

Isaiah 53:3, He was despised, shunned by men, A man of suffering, familiar with disease. As one who hid his face from us, He was despised, we held him of no account. (*Tanakh*)

9. By knowing about the Messiah and believing in Him He will make the many righteous. The Servant in this verse cannot be the nation, for the nation could not bear its own punishment, the individual Servant, the Messiah, bears the punishment as a substitute for the many.

Isaiah 53:11, Out of his anguish he shall see it; He shall enjoy it to the full through his devotion. **“My righteous servant makes the many righteous, It is their punishment that he bears;”** (*Tanakh*)

The remarkable prophecy in Isaiah was understood by the Babylonian Talmud, the Aramaic Targums, and ancient rabbinical commentaries, to refer to the Messiah. Moshe Kohen ibn Crispin (14th century Rabbi):

“This prophecy was delivered by Isaiah at the divine command for the purpose of making known to us something about the nature of the future Messiah, who is to come and deliver Israel ... in order that if anyone should arise claiming to be himself the Messiah, we may reflect and look to see whether we can observe in him any resemblance to the traits described here: if there is a resemblance, then we may believe that he is the Messiah our Righteous; but if not, we cannot do so.”

Though some think this prophecy of the Servant applies to Israel, Isaiah 53:8 states that God says the Servant dies for the “transgression of My people.” The Servant cannot be both Israel dying and My People for which it dies at the same time. The Servant is a distinct Person from the people of Israel.

10. The Messiah would be preceded by a forerunner:

Malachi 3:1, Behold, I am sending My messenger to clear the way before Me, and the Lord whom you seek shall come to His Temple suddenly. As for the angel of the covenant that you desire, he is already coming. (*Tanakh*)

This was fulfilled by John the Baptist. He came as the messenger who prepared the way before the Messiah *Yeshua* [“Me” in the above verse].

11. He would give sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and the lame will walk:

Isaiah 35:5, Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. (*Tanakh*)

Isaiah 35:6, Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb shall shout aloud; For waters shall burst forth in the desert, Streams in the wilderness. (*Tanakh*)

Yeshua performed these miracles many times.

12. The Messiah would be crucified, prophesied centuries before crucifixion was invented.

Psalms 22:16, Dogs surround me; a pack of evil ones closes in on me, like lions they maul my hands and feet. (*Tanakh*)

Peter W Stoner, in *Science Speaks* (1958), a book peer reviewed by men of the American Scientific Affiliation, calculates the probability of one man fulfilling eight prophecies from the time these were given until today as 1×10^{17} or one followed by 17 zeroes (I listed twelve prophecies which would be even more difficult to accomplish). He illustrates this by laying 10^{17} silver dollars across the land of Texas. The silver dollars would cover the state two feet deep. If one was marked with a red X and stirred into the entire pile, then this would be the chance of one blindfolded man selecting and identifying the correct marked coin. That would be virtually impossible. Yet the Hebrew prophets gave at least one hundred prophecies (some calculate three hundred) which were fulfilled literally in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Conclusion

To answer our question, we began with the oldest book of the Hebrew Scriptures and thus we return again to Job. One of Job's friends asked: How are we to be made righteous with God? (Job 9:2) The answer is: By faith in His promise of a Messiah who would make many righteous.

Abraham, biological Patriarch of the Jewish race, was declared righteous by his faith in the promise of a future Messiah (Genesis 15:6).

Yeshua of Nazareth fulfilled more than 100 prophecies during His first coming. Again and again He identified Himself with the Messianic promises of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Ten chapters later Job makes his answer clear. In Job 19:25, Job confidently states: "But as for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will witness at the last upon the dust;" (JPS 1917)

Job wrote this approximately 2,000 years before *Yeshua ha Meshiach* rose from the dead. Job foresaw that reality. For he went on to say, "And after my skin is destroyed, this **I know**, That in my flesh I shall see God, Whom I shall see for myself, And my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (Job 19:25, 26).

Is there anything that would keep you from being declared righteous by God and entering into a personal relationship with God right now? You can by trusting in the finished work of *Yeshua ha Meshiach* who became the true substitutionary sacrifice and offering to God for our sins in the fulfillment of the lamb sacrificed on *Yom Kippur*. Would you not want to have the assurance of Job four thousand years ago, because we *can* know that our Redeemer lives?



About the Author

Dr. Robert L. Dean, Jr.

Dr. Dean is a much-sought-after Bible teacher with over forty years of experience. He serves on the adjunct faculty of Faith Evangelical Seminary and is a member of the Governing Board for Chafer Theological Seminary. Dr. Dean trained for the ministry at Dallas Theological Seminary where he earned a Th.M. in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies and later returned to pursue a Ph.D. in theological studies with an emphasis in Historical Theology. He also earned an M.A. in Philosophy from the University of St. Thomas (1987) and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Faith Evangelical Seminary (2002).

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