

mindful of the responsibilities we have as one of Christ's servants. 1 Peter 2:21 tells us that Christ left us a perfect example, and obviously Christ's example is one that we ultimately cannot live up to.

However, by grace we are saved through faith. We must never lose sight of this simple gospel

message. And for those of us who are not yet baptized, we have in Isaac an amazing example of faith and works, and we learn that through association with Jesus Christ we, like Isaac, can be part of God's family. We should laugh too, and rejoice as we walk together towards our Father's Kingdom.

“Behold the man!”

The titles and descriptions of Jesus of Nazareth

10. A righteous man

Greg Palmer

THE TITLES CONSIDERED in this article reveal to us that Jesus is a perfectly righteous man. Although burdened with the same nature of flesh and blood as us, he did not sin. His judgements are right. Who among us would have dismissed the rulers clamouring for capital punishment with the words, “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone” (Jno. 8:7)? Who among us would have condemned the Pharisees so openly? While being merciful, he maintained the full measure of the righteousness of his Father, of Whom it was said, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. 18:25). God has appointed His Son to be the judge on His behalf; shall not Jesus therefore do right? In considering these titles and marvelling at the righteousness of the Son of God, let us also rekindle our desire to be righteous like him.

Just One

This title is found twice in the book of Acts, in 7:52 and 22:14. The title means, ‘He who is declared to be right’. The context of the record on both occasions is similar. In Acts 7 Stephen uses the title to point out to the Pharisees (of whom Saul of Tarsus was one) that Jesus was right and they were not. In fact they were so wrong that they condemned and killed him. They continued being wrong by putting Stephen to death and persecuting the brethren, which Jesus took to be persecuting himself (9:4,5).

Saul continued as the principal instrument of their unrighteousness until arrested by the Lord on the road to Damascus. Recounting the words

of Ananias, in Acts 22:14 Paul states, “And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know His will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth”. The personal message was that Jesus was right and Saul was wrong. Saul had to face that fact, and hear the voice of the righteous Son of God.

The first act of obedience to Christ is to declare him to be right. This was too much for the Pharisees to take, because in so doing they would have made a declaration of their own unrighteousness. There is no better way to declare that Jesus is right than to believe and follow him.

Jesus Christ the righteous

These words occur in 1 John 2:1: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”. The word “righteous” is the same word as ‘just’. What a magnificent blessing to have as an advocate a man who is titled “Jesus Christ the righteous”! Do we have any doubts about his mediation? Is it possible for him to be unfair or biased? Of course not! The advocates in today's world are sometimes given titles or names to express their character. Names such as ‘fox’ or ‘weasel’ are not uncommon. How can a matter be decided rightly with such an advocate? Both Yahweh and we can safely trust in this mediator to be completely fair and representative of both because he is Jesus Christ the righteous. Would that such a title might be given to us!

The righteous judge

This title is found in 2 Timothy 4:8: "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". The context is interesting. At the end of his life the Apostle Paul left the question of his eternal destiny in the hands of the righteous judge. Were we the judge, he would have been condemned to oblivion for his earlier wickedness against the ecclesia. We would not have sought for his conversion, nor would his repentance have appeased our wrath. The tremendous good that was subsequently done for the cause of Christ would have been easily set aside as our revenge was at last obtained.

Perhaps this scenario is too harsh, but certainly Paul was thankful that the judgement of the righteous judge awaits him, and not that of man. The point that he goes on to make should not be lost on us either; the same righteous judge will be ours also. There will be no wriggling out of his justice. No fancy and corrupt counsel will prevail. Wealth will not prevent the right decision, nor poverty either. When we appear, as we all must, before the judgement seat of Christ, we may confidently expect him to act as God and judge rightly. This is a source of great encouragement

to those who love his appearing, and a warning to those who do not.

"Sun of righteousness"

This title comes from the prophecy of Malachi: "But unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (4:2). It is not difficult to associate this title with our Lord Jesus. He is elsewhere described as "the dayspring from on high" (Lk. 1:78), "the bright and morning star" (Rev. 22:16) and "the light of the world" (Jno. 8:12). The reign of the coming King is described in this way in 2 Samuel 23:3,4: "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain". In this passage the association between the sun and being just is also made.

The natural sun is capable of scorching and destruction, or of providing growth, warmth and life. If we are wicked then the Sun of righteousness will burn us up like stubble (Mal. 4:1). If we fear the Name of God, the extremities (wings) of the Sun will gently warm and heal us, and grant us immortality and youthful vigour.

[\(To be continued\)](#)