

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND GOD'S SELF-NAMING

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Abstract

This paper proposes that biblical "righteousness" is conformity to God's Being and doing and also proposes that God's aseity is the foundational example of "righteousness," as that aseity is implied in Exod. 3:14–15.

Keywords: Righteousness, inductive approaches, subjective element, deductive approach, aseity, God's Being and doing, imago Dei, asymmetry, conformity to God's Being and doing.

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (1 Cor. 5:21, ESV)¹

Serious methodical study of biblical righteousness began in the nineteenth century with a seminal article by Ludwig Diestel (1825–1879)². Diestel focused on righteousness in the Old Testament, and the Old Testament remained the focus of righteousness studies for some time and continues to form the basis of such studies. That comes as no surprise because righteousness terminology occurs much more often in the larger Old Testament corpus than it does in the New Testament.

Theologians and interpreters who have sought to explore biblical righteousness have normally proceeded inductively³.

¹ Translations are English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

² Ludwig Diestel, *Die Idee der Gerechtigkeit, vorzüglich im Alten Testamente*, in *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* 5; hereafter, "Idee", Gotha, 1860, pp. 173-253.

³ The lexicons all agree that "righteousness" means conformity to a norm, but what the norm might mean remains "up for grabs," as the ongoing debate shows.