

The Integrity of Truth, Prov 8:8; Wisdom Communicates from the Source of Righteous Perfection: “Setheq”: the Thinking of a Judge; God’s Integrity

12. Wisdom continues her exhortation in the final verse of the second stanza:

Verse 8: The Integrity of Truth:

Proverbs 8:8 - “All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing crooked or perverted in them.” (NASB)

1. This verse begins with the same way as verse 7, “The words formed in my mouth are utterances” The prepositional phrase that follows notes the source of the truth that Wisdom utters: **בְּיָשָׁר׃** *besetheq*, “in righteousness.”
 “In” either qualifies the realm within which Wisdom speaks or the norm according to which she speaks.¹
2. We have established that the divine attribute of righteousness refers to divine perfection and is expressed through the attribute of veracity. The divine attribute of veracity means that all God does conform to His righteousness.
3. This means that God’s Word is absolute truth. Bible doctrine is therefore the revelation of divine standards that find their origin in God’s perfect righteousness.
4. Righteous and justice combine with love to produce divine integrity, and constitute the system through which God deals with the human race.
5. The biblical words that are translated righteousness are, in the Hebrew, *setheq* (**קִישָׁר׃**) and *sethaqah* (**קִישָׁר׃**) and, the Greek, *dikaïosunē* (**δικαιοσύνη**). The concept behind each is expressed by fifth-century B.C. Greek historian Herodotus \hi-räd'-a-tas\ as “the thinking of a judge in allotting to each one what is due him,” i.e., good, clear, objective thinking that gives everyone a fair shake before the law.
6. A precise analysis of the technical meanings of *dikaïosunē*, and by application the Old Testament’s *setheq*, is developed in this excerpt from R. B. Thieme, Jr.:

In 280 B.C., over a century after the Golden Age of Greece, the Old Testament Scriptures were translated from Hebrew into Greek by seventy-two scholars in Alexandria, Egypt. In their amazingly accurate version called the Septuagint, *dikaïosunē* stood for the Hebrew words **קִישָׁר׃** (*tsedeq*) and **קִישָׁר׃** (*tsedaqah*), which can mean either righteousness or justice. The concepts are so interrelated that sometimes they cannot be distinguished, and the Hebrew does not attempt to separate them. Whenever God’s justice or righteousness is mentioned in the Old Testament, *dikaïosunē* appears in the Septuagint. (p. 30)

In Scripture, “the *dikaïosunē* of God” means one of three things: (1) the overall “integrity” of God, (2) His “righteousness” as the principle of His integrity, or (3) His “justice” as the function of His integrity.

The genitive case of *theos* makes the distinction between these definitions: it is both a subjective and possessive genitive. A noun in the subjective genitive is the subject of the action: that is, it produces the action of the word it modifies—God’s integrity in action is His justice. (p. 31)

¹ Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs*, 397-98.



In the possessive genitive, *theos* indicates something that God possesses as a principle: God's integrity in principle is His righteousness. Whatever its specific translation, however, *dikaiosunē theou* is an abstract term; it always in some way connotes God's integrity set against the background of all His attributes. Divine integrity is, therefore, infinite, perfect, eternal, unchangeable—and incomprehensible apart from its revelation in doctrine.² (pp. 31-32)

7. What we are able to conclude from this analysis is that the Hebrew word *setheq* and the Greek word *dikaiosunē* refer to the integrity of God but the syntax and semantics of a given passage can give it the meaning of either "righteousness," the principle of divine integrity, or "justice," the function of divine integrity.
8. In Proverbs 8:8, Wisdom contends that, "All the utterances of my mouth are in righteousness." Waltke advises that the prepositional phrase *besetheq*, "in righteousness," either qualifies the realm within which Wisdom speaks or the norm according to which she speaks.
9. When Wisdom directs mandates to the naïve and the foolish it is objective, therefore the emphasis is on the application of her principles and emphasizes the function of justice through application.
10. The believer is proficient at this in spiritual sophistication and world-class in spiritual maturity. To acquire these levels of function, one must listen with interest to Wisdom's instruction and then have a desire to facilitate its principles into his daily modus operandi.
11. Her instruction is verbal and emanates from the "realm" of divine righteousness and functions under the "norms" regulated by divine justice.
12. Thus the integrity of God may be acquired in the soul of a believer:

As a principle, *dikaiosunē theou* involves God alone, apart from man; but as divine action, the term can include man. In this sense, *dikaiosunē* is sometimes used as a synonym for εὐσεβεία (*eusebeia*), "godliness" and becomes a technical term for spiritual maturity. Maturity is the believer's maximum adjustment to the justice of God or total relationship with the integrity of God.³
13. Therefore, when Wisdom makes the claim that her words are "in righteousness" she can refer to "norms" by which justice functions i.e., the application of righteous standards to life and circumstances:

***Dikaiosunē* means "justice" as a characteristic of a judge, as the legal thinking of a judge, as the professional integrity of a judge. It means "righteousness," not merely in the sense of being good, but as a principle leading to correct thought and action. It means "to be fair and equitable in dealing with others"; it means "virtue, justice"—integrity.⁴**

² R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Integrity of God*, 4th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2005), 30-32.

³ Thieme, *The Integrity of God*, 32.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.