

A God of Righteousness

Key Verse: *"I the
LORD love
judgment, I hate
robbery for burnt
offering; and I will
direct their work
in truth, and I
will make an
everlasting
covenant with
them."
—Isaiah 61:8*

Selected Scripture:
*Isaiah 61:8-11;
62:1-3*

DURING OLD TESTAMENT times, the Jews had a unique relationship with God who especially favored them prior to their rejection of Jesus as their Savior. God told them, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth."—Amos 3:2

The Prophet Isaiah foretold of Christ's earthly ministry involving Israel. (Isa. 61:1,2) During our Lord's First Advent, while reading in the synagogue, he identified himself as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon

me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."—Luke 4:18-21

Our Lord's message was addressed to those humble Jews who realized their undone condition, were ready to accept him as the Messiah, and were desirous of becoming participants in the heavenly phase of the promised kingdom of righteousness. The reaction of many who heard Jesus' words was one of unbelief as well as hostility. Some desired to kill him, but his hour had not yet come to die, and he skillfully passed through their midst and departed to another location.—vss. 28-30

As a mediator between Jehovah and Israel, Moses revealed God's righteousness and his word by giving them the Law. "Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?"—Deut. 4:5-8

Our Key Verse alludes to God's displeasure with Israel's iniquity in bringing forth offerings to him from blemished animals as opposed to giving the very best from their flocks. Thus the Lord illustrated the wayward course of his chosen people as "robbery for burnt offering."

The foregoing lesson should be deeply engrained in the hearts and minds of all consecrated followers of Christ. At the present time, we are to be faithful in fulfilling our commission to preach the glad tidings of salvation and manifest holiness in our walk. By so doing, we may entertain the hope of promulgating the "everlasting covenant" that will result in blessings to all the human family when God's righteous rule is established on earth. ■