**The Church at Corinth**

**A Church Facing Inner Problems – #17**

**Washed, Sanctified, Justified**

**1 Corinthians 6:11**

***1 Corinthians 6:11 –*** *This is what some of you were; but now you have been washed, you have been sanctified; you have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

**Notes on the verse:**

**VERSE 11 –** *This is what some of you were;*

Some Corinthian Christians before their conversion were undoubtedly to be found among the ***adikoi***(evildoers) Paul has just enumerated.

**VERSE 11 –** *but now you have been washed, you have been sanctified; you have been justified…*

Three achievements of Christ are singled out: washed, sanctified, and justified.

1. “washed,” referring to baptism, the sinful life of the vices mentioned in (vv. 9-10) is washed away (cf. Acts 22:16; Eph 5:26);

2. “sanctified,” or made holy (1:2; cf. 2 Thess 2:12);

3. “justified,” or set in a right relationship with God, as in by Christ.

The three achievements are simply mentioned with no chronological or logical order among them.

**VERSE 11 –** *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.and by the Spirit of our God.*

The effects of baptismal washing, sanctification, and justification are thus related explicitly to the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Tim 3:16). Noteworthy is the triadic ending of this section: God (the Father), Jesus Christ, Spirit of God.

**Two Major Studies: Being Washed, Being Justified**

**Being Washed**

In the OT, washing was a common practice and normally it was done by water. Defilement was in fact a dirt that can be removed by the ritual of washing with water. The newly born was washed with water (Ezek 16:4), women (2 Sam 11:2), to enhance her beauty Ruth“ *washed and anointed and put on her best garment*” (Ruth 3:3). Ezekiel speaks to Israel the harlot, “*Furthermore you sent for men to come from afar, to whom a messenger was sent; and there they came. And you washed yourself for them, painted your eyes, and adorned yourself with ornaments.*”(23:40). Washing was also putting an end to self-inflected sadness and grief, such as the kind King David endured after the death of the first born child of his adultery: “*David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate*.” (2 Sam 12:20)

**Defect of External Washing**

Cleansing is what is required after a “fall.” Common practice can lead some to think that moral defect can be removed by water (Islamic practice) and also in the OT we hear the cry of the prophet Isaiah, "*Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil.*” (Isa 1:16, Prov 30:12). And Jeremiah shouted, “*O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved. How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?*” (4:14). The best washing is repentance and to this David cried out, “*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*” (Ps 51:7)

**God’s Promise to Wash Away Sins**

Yahweh’s promise was declared by Isaiah, “*When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning,*” (4:4) and here the spirit of judgment (***meshphat***) and the spirit of ***baoor***, that is fire , so cleansing is integral to judgment. The Prophet Zachariah speaks the word of God and says:

*In that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. “It shall be in that day," says the Lord of hosts, "that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land.*” (13:1-2)

Purification is promised by God. This divine act is what God will do, “Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.” (Ezek 36:25).

God the Creator and the Redeemer calls Israel,

***21*** *“Remember these, O Jacob, And Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me!*

***22*** *I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, And like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you."*

***23*** *Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it! Shout, you lower parts of the earth; Break forth into singing, you mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, And glorified Himself in Israel.*

***24*** *Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, And He who formed you from the womb: "I am the Lord, who makes all things, Who stretches out the heavens all alone, Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself.”* (Isa 44:21-24)

**Jewish Washing in the NT**

The Gospel of Mark 7:1-3 tells us: *“Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they* ***2*** *saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault.* ***3*** *For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders.*”

This way of the elders can be seen among Sunni Moslems today, washing the whole hand, the palms, the back of the hand, and from the wrist to the elbow. Peter did not eat with the Gentiles because he was not sure that they have washed their hands (Gal 2:12).

**Washing in Baptism**

The first and the most important witness comes from the disciple of Jesus, Ananias, who said to Saul, “*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*” (Acts 22:16) The Greek word baptism comes from the verb that means originally to submerge something in water. And thus Baptism has acquired from the NT times the name “washing.” Christ comes to wash the whole church (Eph 5:26) that He might sanctify and “*cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.*” These words should not meet deaf ears of any congregation that denies this corporate washing in Baptism which although is given to each member but the end result is to join those who have been washed. This is repeated in Hebrews 10: 22, “*let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water*,” which is impossible to think of as a reference to Jewish washing.

In the Upper Room when Jesus was washing the feet of his disciples and Peter protested, *“Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you.”* (John 13:10). Some NT scholars such as Oscar Cullmann saw in the words of Jesus a reference to a baptism that must have been given by Christ himself.

**Washed by His Blood.**

If washing is an act of cleanings, and if that was promised by God in the OT and now is the work of the Lord Jesus who washes us in Baptism, what is the meaning of such words: “*But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*” (1 John 1:7). Also look at 1 Peter 1:1-2 and Revelation 1:5: we are washed from our sin by his blood.

Multiple basic elements have come together to create this great proclamation.

1. Sin and death are not two different problems: one will bring the other. Sin brought death (Rom 5:12), but notice that “*The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.*” (1 Cor 15:56). Death brings sin, because death created in us the hidden desire for immortality and that is the “sting” that wounds us with sin; like a knife that stabs us. So by conquering death by his death, by the shedding of his blood our Lord brings freedom to us for that hidden desire to sin that is to be immortal by seeking a source of life outside God.
2. The blood of Jesus shed on the cross is our walk with him. It is our inner ***metamorphosis*** derives from [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_language) *μεταμόρφωσις,* "transformation, transforming", from *μετα* ([*meta-*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meta)), "change" and *μορφή* (*morphe*), "form.” His blood works in us on three levels:

The first is the power of his sacrificial love that moves the will to give up and to reduce our hesitation.

The second is the power to free ourselves from what we want because we have received from the Lord this inner freedom that makes us leave what we love for the greater love.

The Third is the metamorphic process that takes place in the mind where the values and the images and even our words have changed to those of the new life.

**A Letter from Philemon**

“My Brother George,

May the joy and the peace of our Lord be in you always. The blood of our Lord works in us sometimes in a mysterious way and sometimes in a more obvious way. The mysterious ones are too many but among them we can notice in us sudden longing for the Lord, for his blood calls us. Also [comes] a wave of deep desire to love him and to give up all that we have.

As for the obvious ones they are too many and each one of us receives from the Lord according to his commitment. But among these is the resistance to obvious evil, the fiery refusal to give up our faith, and speaking the truth. All these are also the work of the Holy Spirit because it is written about the death of our Lord Jesus, “*For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*” (Heb 9: 13-14) The Spirit prepared the body of Jesus in the “womb” of Mary, and the same Spirit “anointed” Jesus after Jesus came out of the water of Jordan, so also the same Spirit offered him to God the Father and now to us. Why? Because we are not left to our own will and to our own understanding but are given the cleansing of the blood and the power of the Spirit to which the apostle indicated (See Rom 8:27, 35).

May the power of his blood that is in you forever give you the same strength and courage of Jesus.

Philēmōn (No date)

**Appendix A – Washing with Water**

In this late 3rd century apocryphal *[not from scriptures]* story found in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 840, Jesus debates with a Pharisee about Jewish washing with water.

Taking them along, he *[Jesus]* went into the place of purification itself and wandered around in the temple.

Then a certain high priest of the Pharisees named Levi came toward them and said to the savior, "Who permitted you to wander in this place of purification and to see these holy vessels, even though you have not bathed and the feet of your disciples have not been washed? And now that you have defiled it, you walk around in this pure area of the temple where only a person who has bathed and changed his clothes can walk, and even such a person does not dare to look upon these holy vessels.”

Standing with his disciples nearby, the savior replied, "Since you are here in the temple too, are you clean?”

The Pharisee said to him, "I am clean, for I bathed in the pool of David. I went down into the pool by one set of stairs and came back out by another. Then I put on white clothes and they were clean. And then I came and looked at these holy vessels.”

Replying to him, the savior said, "Woe to blind people who do not see! You have washed in the gushing waters that dogs and pigs are thrown into day and night. And when you washed yourself, you scrubbed the outer layer of skin, the layer of skin that prostitutes and flute-girls anoint and wash and scrub when they put on makeup to become the desire of the men. But inside they are filled with scorpions and all unrighteousness. But my disciples and I, whom you say have not washed, we have washed in waters of eternal life that come from the God of heaven.”

**Being Justified – From Genesis to Romans**

**Genesis**

In Genesis 15:1ff we meet the word that became a center of a debate since the Reformation and in our time, “righteousness.”

To be faithful to the Biblical narrative, let us read the opening of Genesis 15:

***1*** *After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."* ***2*** *But Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"* ***3*** *Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"* ***4*** *And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."* ***5*** *Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."* ***6*** *And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.”*

Two important notes are:

1. Abraham was not on trial. God was “his shield,” not his Judge.
2. Abraham believed in the Lord and the Lord accounted it to Abraham as “righteousness.”

**Romans**

Abraham is the main figure in Paul’s main argument against both Jews and Gentiles. If we follow Paul’s argument we will not make a mistake. Paul wanted to preach Christ as Savior of both Jews and Gentiles. For the Jews the Law is the moral way of declaring that someone is “right” and can be acquitted in Court, “*If there is a dispute between men, and they come to court, that the judges may judge them, and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked*” (Deut 25:1)

God is also Judge, “*The Lord shall judge the peoples; Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, And according to my integrity within me. 9 Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, But establish the just; For the righteous God tests the hearts and minds. 10 My defense is of God, Who saves the upright in heart. 11 God is a just judge, And God is angry with the wicked every day. 12 If he does not turn back, He will sharpen His sword; He bends His bow and makes it ready.* (Psalm 7:9-12) But we have to keep in mind that the Hebrew word ***sdak*** was used in the OT for “weights” (Lev 19:36; Ezek 45:10) and the right “measure” (Deut 25:15). A good and correct “sacrifice” (Deut 33:119, Ps 4:6 and more clearly in Ps 51:18-19) was, *“Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness; the correct one, With burnt offering and whole burnt offering; Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.*” Being also correct or right is also applied in Gen 38:26, “*So Judah acknowledged them and said, “She has been more righteous than I, because I did not give her to Shelah my son.” And he never knew her again.*” Judah was talking of Tamar as a ***sadkh*** for taking her right. The same is said about David who is more “*righteous that King Saul because, David did not kill Saul God’s anointed”* (1Sam 24:17). The same is said about Samaria and Sodom.

In the book of Psalms, we have two words – faithfulness and righteousness – that may confuse the Latin mind as in Psalm 89:

***1*** *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever;With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.*

***2****For I have said, “Mercy shall be built up forever; Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens.”*

***3****“I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David:*

***4****‘Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.’”*

Then

***13*** *You have a mighty arm;Strong is Your hand, and high is Your right hand.*

***14****Righteousness (****sdkah****) and justice (****mishphat****) are the foundation of Your throne;  mercy (****chesd****) and truth (****emet****, stability) go before Your face.*

***15****Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound! They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance.*

***16****In Your name they rejoice all day long, And in Your righteousness they are exalted.*

***17****For You are the glory of their strength, And in Your favor our horn is exalted.*

***18****For our shield belongs to the Lord, And our king to the Holy One of Israel.*

There is no struggle in God between his divine attributes. Then we read at the end:

***46****How long, Lord? Will You hide Yourself forever? WillYour wrath burn like fire?*

***47****Remember how short my time is; For what futility have You created all the children of men?*

***48****What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his life from the power of the grave? Selah*

***49****Lord, where are Your former loving kindnesses, Which You swore to David in Your truth?*

***50****Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants— How I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples,*

***51****With which Your enemies have reproached, O Lord, With which they have reproached the footsteps of Your anointed.*

***52*** *Blessed be the Lord forevermore! Amen and Amen.*

**Prayers of Righteousness and Salvation**

In Isaiah 46 God says:

***12*** *“Listen to Me, you stubborn-hearted, who are far from righteousness:*

***13*** *I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off; My salvation shall not linger. And I will place salvation in Zion, For Israel My glory.*

Righteousness can’t be forensic *[legal]* or penal, as we see in Isaiah 51:

***5*** *My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, And My arms will judge the peoples; The coastlands will wait upon Me, And on My arm they will trust.*

***6*** *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, And look on the earth beneath. For the heavens will vanish away like smoke, The earth will grow old like a garment, And those who dwell in it will die in like manner; But My salvation will be forever, And My righteousness will not be abolished.*

***7*** *“Listen to Me, you who know righteousness, You people in whose heart is My law: Do not fear the reproach of men, Nor be afraid of their insults.*

***8****For the moth will eat them up like a garment, And the worm will eat them like wool; But My righteousness will be forever, And My salvation from generation to generation.”*

In this bold prayer of Psalm 35 we read:

***24*** *Stir up Yourself, and awake to my vindication, To my cause, my God and my Lord.*

*Vindicate me, O Lord my God, according to Your righteousness; And let them not rejoice over me.*

***25*** *Let them not say in their hearts, “Ah, so we would have it!” Let them not say, “We have swallowed him up.”* ***26*** *Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion who rejoice at my hurt; Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor who exalt themselves against me.*

***27****Let them shout for joy and be glad, Who favor my righteous cause; And let them say continually, “Let the Lord be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant.”*

***28*** *And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness and of Your praise all the day long.”*

Then we see in Psalm 71 prayer as an appeal to the divine righteousness; a prayer strong enough to confirm the salvific side rather than the penal side of righteousness:

***1*** *In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be put to shame.* ***2*** *Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape; Incline Your ear to me, and save me.* ***3*** *Be my strong refuge, To which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me,**For You are my rock and my fortress.” (71:1-3)*

Regarding trial, Psalm 143 says:

*“****1*** *Hear my prayer, O Lord, Give ear to my supplications! In Your faithfulness answer me, And in Your righteousness.*

***2*** *Do not enter into judgment with Your servant, For in Your sight no one living is righteous.”*

**God and Israel in the Courtroom**

In Micah 6, God appeals to Israel:

***2*** *“Hear, O you mountains, the Lord’s complaint, And you strong foundations of the earth; For the Lord has a complaint against His people, And He will contend with Israel.* ***3*** *“O My people, what have I done to you? And how have I wearied you? Testify against Me.*

***4*** *For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.*

***5*** *O My people, remember now What Balak king of Moab counseled, And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him, From Acacia Grove[a] to Gilgal, That you may know the righteousness of the Lord.”*

When God calls for a trial in Isaiah 43, He says to Israel:

***24*** *“You have brought Me no sweet cane with honey, Nor have you satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices; But you have burdened Me with your sins, You have wearied Me with your iniquities.*

***25*** *“I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins.*

***26****Put Me in remembrance; Let us contend together; State your case, that you may be acquitted (****chsdk****)”*

The vindicated ones according to Psalm 24:

***3*** *“Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?*

***4*** *He who has clean hands and a pure heart, Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.*

***5*** *He shall receive blessing from the Lord, And righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

**Justification and the Background of Romans**

Christ came to save us all, to reconcile us with God and to justify us; that is, to make our communion with God “right.” But this was the Father’s achievement. In Romans 4 Paul presents us with a lesson from the OT and sets up Abraham as the example of both

***Romans 4:1*** *What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh?* ***2*** *For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.* ***3*** *For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* ***4*** *Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt.* ***5*** *But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,* ***6*** *just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:* ***7*** *"Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;* ***8*** *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin."* ***9*** *Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.* ***10*** *How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.* ***11*** *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,* ***12*** *and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.”*

The application comes to this declaration later in the chapter:

***Romans 4:23*** *Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him,*

***24*** *but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,* ***25*** *who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*

**Righteousness Through Faith**

There was no Court in the example of Abraham, but is there a court in the example of Jesus? Please notice that Jesus is not a replacement for Abraham; this is not in Paul, and Paul is comparing two events where God was gracious to Abraham who did nothing, and now God is gracious to us because of Christ and this is not from the Law. Paul’s words in Romans 3 are clear, but now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets:

***Romans 3:22*** *even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;* ***23*** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,* ***24*** *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,* ***25*** *whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,* ***26*** *to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

Paul wants to say, the Law is not the source of God’s righteousness. If the Law is the source of God’s righteousness no one will be saved according to Romans 3:20.

Revealed, which is the verb ***phneroun*** (here and 2 Cor 2:14, 4:2 and Rom 1:19), means “made known, manifested openly." It should not be understood as the verb “revelation” (***apokalyptein***) that we see in Romans 1:17. The witness of the Law and the prophets to the attributes of God is well known in the OT. Witness and source are not the same here.

**‘The Righteousness of God’**

Paul repeats this key phrase, “the Righteousness of God” (***dikaiosyne theou***) to emphasize that it is an attribute of God. Paul emphasizes that the divine initiative stems from an aspect of God himself or to use the common old word in ancient Christian theology, “*nature of God*.” Paul uses the phrase the “righteousness of God” in the same sense that he used in Romans 3:5, to which this verse clearly alludes.

The righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ. A good translation should be according to the Greek, “through the faith of Jesus Christ.” The sense of the Greek way of writing is disputed by NT scholars. Some commentators would understand it as subjective: “through the fidelity of Jesus Christ,” i.e., his obedience to his Father, even to death on the cross (Haussleiter, NKZ 2 [ 109-45, 205-30; Kittel, TSK 79 [ 419-36; Howard, HTR 60 [ 459-65; ExpTim 85 [ 212-1 5; Price, Int 28 (1974): 272-73; Williams, JBL 99 [ 272-78; CBQ 49 43 1-47; Johnson, CBQ 44 [ 77-90; Ramaroson, ScEsp 39 [ 81-92;40 [65-77; M Hooker, NTS 35 [ 32 1-42M]). Hooker supports this interpretation by appealing to Romans 3:3 (“the faith of God”), Rom 4:12, 16 (“the faith of Abraham”), but these texts speak of the faith *of* an individual, not faith *in* an individual.

While this interpretation might seem plausible (faith of Christ vs. faith in Christ), it runs counter to the main thrust of Paul’s theology. Consequently, many commentators continue to understand the genitive (the name) as objective, “through faith in Jesus Christ” (as Roms 3:26; Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Phil 3:9; cf. Eph 3:12. So also Martin Luther WAusg 56.36; Luther Works,25.31; Scholia 3.22 ;WAusg 56.256; and Luther Works 25.242: “fides in Christum”), Cranfield, Romans, vol, 1,203; Käsemann, Commentary, 94.). Indeed, as J. Dunn rightly notes (Romans, 166), Paul does not draw attention to Christ’s faithfulness elsewhere in the extended exposition of Romans, even where it would have been highly appropriate, especially in chap. 4, where Abraham’s ***pistis***, faith, is the model for the believer. Paul is not thinking of Christ’s fidelity to the Father; nor does he propose it as a pattern for Christian conduct. Rather, Christ himself is the concrete manifestation of God’s uprightness, and human beings appropriate to themselves the effects of the manifestation of the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus. Indeed, that divine righteousness of God is comprehended only by those who have the eyes of faith.

This means that since Jesus himself is that manifestation of the righteousness of God. There is no room for any Atonement Theory here. It is not an event but a manifestation of the Person who is the righteousness of God. We should not reduce the Person to a concept. Origen of Alexandria was the first to spot what Jesus is, for he says, “the rightness of God is Jesus Christ” (Comment on Romans Bk, 3, 7,10). Jesus, then, as a person is not a tool but the very person who has the same righteousness of God, being God Himself on the cross

**Comparison with other NT texts**

For a similar objective genitive with ***pistis***, faith, see Mark 11:22, ***echete pistin theou***, “have faith in God,” which stands in contrast to ***ten pistin tou theou*** (Rom 3:3; also Acts 3:16 (***en te pistei tou onomatos autou***), “through faith in his name [person]”); Phil 1:27 (***te pistei tou euangeliou***), “for faith in the gospel”); Col 2:12 (***dia tës pisteos tës energeias tou theou***), “through faith in the power of God”); 2 Thess 2:13; Jas 2:1; Rev 14:12; cotemporary with the NT is the Jewish Josephus, Ant. of the Jews, 191.2 S16 “furnishes much credibility of God’s power”). See further the letter to Diognetus 11:6; also the appended note in Murray, Romans 1.363-74;C Moule, ExpTim 68 (1956-57): 157, 221-22.

Note that frequently (Rom10: 9; 1 Cor 12:3; and 2 Cor 4:5, 14) Jesus Christ is presented *as the object of faith*. Does the verb ***pisteuein***, “to believe” ever have Christ as the subject, i.e., “the believer,” in the NT? Not even Hebrews 12:2, where Jesus is the perfecter of faith, does the NT suggest this. Jesus is the object of our belief

**By His Grace**

“By grace,” in Exodus 12:11 according to the LXX, grace is what is “without silver.” This is confirmed by Romans 5:17, “a sheer gift,” (Rom 5:15), which is similar to the Dead Sea, in QL: “*And by your grace you judge them with abundance of mercy*’’ 1QH6:9; cf. 7:27).

“By his grace,” ***dorean***, has been used by Paul to emphasize the gratuity of what has been achieved for humanity (cf. Rom 5:15, 17, 20-21; 6:1; 1 Cor 15:10). He is not merely thinking of the OT notion of ***hesed***, “steadfast kindness,” the gracious root of Israel’s covenantal relationship with God, but rather of the new plan stemming wholly from a merciful benevolence of God.

This is so because it is a manifestation through the Person where a personal relationship is given as grace and by faith

**Through the Redemption**

“Through the redemption that comes in Christ Jesus.” The Greek could be translated, “through the redemption (that is) in Christ Jesus.” Again the Christ-event; Christ is a person in whom the human beings are not only “justified” by Christ Jesus, but are also “redeemed” by him. Jesus is not a tool but is the very Person of the Son of the Father.

Christ Jesus by his death on the cross has emancipated or ransomed humanity from its bondage to sin. If Paul extends the redemption achieved by God himself for Israel at the Exodus (Ps 78:35) to all humanity then this divine act, remembering that in OT God did not pay a ransom, must be taken as a model of divine redemption.

The ransoming has already taken place at the death and resurrection of Christ (3:25), but its final phase is still awaited when the body is liberated from corruption (8:23). Paul uses ***en Christo Jesou***, which expresses the mediation of God’s redemption “through Christ Jesus,” i.e., through the death of Christ (Rom 3:25; 4:25; 5:9-10; 2 Cor 5:19, 21), or else the universal sphere in which that redemption takes place, “in (the person of) Christ Jesus,” Who stands for the human race. The actuality of redemption is found in Christ already glorified to all who are “in Christ Jesus” who have become partakers of the righteousness of God of God through him. The above note from Origen of Alexandria is supported by the very words of Paul, “*we become the righteousness of God*’’ in Christ who Himself is the righteousness of God (1 Cor 1:30). Through Christ, a human being becomes a member of the people that God has acquired for himself, a member of the new people of God. For God has made Jesus the source of life, “our righteousness and redemption” (1 Cor 1:30).

**‘Through his blood’**

There is no “through” in the Greek, so this literally means “in his blood.” This can mean the shedding of his blood on the cross, or by the pouring out of that which signified his life: “*For the life of every creature is its blood*” (Lev 17:14; cf. 17:10). The last option is nearer to Paul Jewish mind.

In the Greek text the words ***en to autou haimnati***, “through his blood,” are separated from the verb ***proetheto*** by the phrase ***dia tes pisteos***, “through faith.” Does the verb ***proetheto*** suggest “for the manifestation of his righteousness through his (Jesus’) blood”? Most likely it is to be taken with the verb, because the first ***autou*** refers to Jesus (“his blood”), whereas the second refers to the Father (“God’s righteousness”). There is no separation between the righteousness of God the Father and that of Jesus his Son.

**Presenting God’s Plan of Expiation**

God has presented him [Jesus] as a means of expiating sin.

Two important words must be considered: “presented” and “expiated.”

If God presented or put forward his Son, as Paul says, then the second word and the rest of the text should not be a problem.

“God put forward,” which rules out a demand and even a necessity that presented itself to God. The work of the Redeemer has suffered from the Arian understanding of Father-Son relationship (separation, two different entities) . Arianism has no place in the Letters of Paul. A different translation by Origen, which is supported by Cranfield, reads

“God designed him to be”, i.e., God proposed him, as God planned of old a new mode of human salvation. But if stress is put on the prefix pro- of the verb, then it would mean, “God proposed him,” i.e., set him forth or displayed him publicly. Then it would be a reference not so much to the divine plan of salvation but to the crucifixion (cf. Gal 3:1, “before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly displayed (“as crucified”). The verb is so used in the LXX of Ex 29:23; 40:23; Lev 24:8; 2 Macc 1:8, 15 (the setting out of the showbread) and is so used in Greek literature (Herodotus, History 31.48; Thucydides, Peloponnesian War 7.34). This sense has been used by Bruce, Käsemann, Sanday and Headlam; it is preferred because of other references to divine manifestation in this context. In any case, the effects of justification, redemption, and expiation are ascribed to God the Father (***ho theos***), who brings about such effects for humanity through the death of Christ displayed publicly on the cross.

**Expiation or Propitiation: Which Translation?**

There is frequent commentary of whether “expiation” or “propitiation” is correct.

The problem with the latter, propitiation, is that it invariably evokes the idea of appeasing God. Whereas in Romans 3:25 Paul explicitly states that it is God himself who provided the ***hilasterion*** (loosely, “mercy seat”) and did not demand it.

More important is the fact that this problem of translation belongs only to the English-speaking scholarship. It was occasioned by C H Dodd’s study of the ***hilaskesthai*** word group (“Atonement”), to which L Morris replied (Apostolic Preaching of the Cross chs. 5-6; See also Hill, Greek Words 23-36; Ladd, Theology 470-74). But what L Morris did not notice, similar to many Christians in the West, is that in the Israelite worship, God is never “propitiated” or “appeased.” by a sacrifice. The OT does not express anywhere at all, and does not even hint that God’s wrath is averted by any sacrifice. Sacrifices are offered to purify and to take away the sins as an obstacle between God and humanity.

The objective of the atoning act is rather the removal of sin; that is, either by purifying the person or object, or by wiping out the sin. Atonement is characteristically made “for” a person or “for sin.” And it can be said that it is God himself who expiates the sin or for the sin (as in the LXX Ps 24:11; 2Kings 5:18. See, TDNT vol 3:315-17 and the comments on Rom 3:25 on pages 320-21). Of course, the atoning act thus removes the sin, but it does so by acting on the sin rather than on God. The imagery is more of the removal of a corrosive stain. J. Milgrom, a Jewish scholar in his extensive study of Leviticus, 1-16,1991, has argued that the sacrifice for sin should be called a “purification offering” and that the “blood is a purging element” (pp 254ff). The text of Leviticus itself supports his exposition since this offering or sacrifice is called “most holy.’’ Leviticus 6:27 says that even whatever touches the flesh of this sacrifice shall be holy and when any of its blood is splashed on a garment, you shall wash it in a holy place.

It is necessary here to stress the fact that the NT uses the concept of purification of sins as the atoning act of Jesus in different places such as Hebrew 1:3; 2 Peter 1:9 and in particular the blood of Jesus which purifies from our sins in 1 John 1:7,9. More importantly, the washing by water for purification is a reference to Baptism, Eph 5:26. The same use of the verb (*we should cleanse*) in 2 Cor 7:1 betrays Paul Jewish mind.

**Appendix B - What is the meaning of ἱλαστήριον ?**

***Hilasterion*** is generally translated as “mercy seat,” but what does that mean?

It is used twice in the NT, Rom 3:25 and Hebrews 9:5. In the LXX the same word was used 7 times in Ex 25:6-7 and Lev 16:13-15 to translate the Hebrew  ***kapporreth***, the Mercy Seat of the Ark. This translation is supported by Philo the Alexandrian Jew, (Moses 2:95.97) and other places in the writings of Philo.

We should stress the fact that in most ancient commentaries on Romans by Origen (Rom. 3:8 PG 14:946C-952B), John Chrysostom (homily 7:2 on Rom), Theodoret (Commentary on Rom 3:25), Cyril of Alexandria, (Rom 3:21, PG 74:780B) these fathers spoke Greek, wrote their commentaries in Greek, and understood this Greek word as the “Mercy Seat.”

More crucial, however, is the meaning of the word itself. Because ***hilasterion***, a noun, is related to the verb ***hilaskesthai***, “to appease, propitiate,” often used of appeasing angry gods in classical and Hellenistic Greek literature. Many commentators think of ***hilasterion*** in this sense: God has set forth Christ as “appeasing” or as “a means of appeasing” his own anger or wrath. Thus for L Morris and Cranfield (Romans, 201, 214-18), Paul identifies Christ as a “propitiatory sacrifice.” But this interpretation of ***hilasterion*** finds no support in the Greek OT or in Pauline usage elsewhere. Part of the problem is that Paul uses the word only here. It was also used Hebrews 9:5, where the meaning supports the reading of the fathers of the church, the mercy seat.

Consequently, ***hilasterion*** is better understood against the background of the LXX usage of the Day of Atonement rite, so it would depict Christ as the new “Mercy Seat,” presented or displayed by the Father as a means of expiating or wiping away the sins of humanity, indeed, as the place of the presence of God, of his revelation, and of his expiating power. This is also supported by the Coptic NT reading of Romans 3:21-25. The Coptic translation rendered the whole text: “*Whom God before set as a Forgiver…”* (Coptic Version of the NT, 1905, and also Luther’s German translation of Romans 3:24.)

It is, however, sometimes thought that this specific meaning of ***hilasterion*** as “Mercy Seat” would have escaped the comprehension of Paul’s readers. For if the verb ***proetheto*** means “displayed publicly,” would not that meaning militate against the sense of Christ as ***hilasterion***, hidden in the Holy of Holies of old? For that reason, some commentators would take the word only in a generic sense, as would be known, for instance, from the Greek Inscription of the city of Cos to Augustus: “The people (offer this) as an oblation to the gods for the salvation of Imperator Caesar Augustus, son of God” (W. R. Paton and E. L. Hicks, The Inscriptions of Cos, 1891; reprinted, 1990 and TDNT Vol 3.320.

The Christians of Rome, to whom Paul is writing, almost certainly would have read the OT in the Greek LXX. The Greek word ***hilasterion*** would have been known to them. Again, why should we deprive Paul of the possibility of using “Mercy Seat” in a symbolic or figurative sense, which is precisely what he seems to be doing, even though he insists as well on the public display of Christ crucified on Calvary and not in the hidden Holy of Holies.

**Conclusion**

1. Paul does not say that the Son appeased God the Father and averted His anger or wrath. There is no text in the entire Pauline letters and in particular Romans which even hint to that.

2. Nowhere does Paul speak of the Son offering a sacrifice to God the Father in Romans, in fact in 2 Corinthians 5:17ff where the main point is the new creation, Paul says, ‘ *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not charging their trespasses to them*” (***me logoizomenos autois ta paraptwmata autwn***). If Paul wanted to say that God was charging the trespasses on the account of Jesus Christ, here in Romans 3:21ff is the best place in the entire NT for that. But because God was in Christ, there is no place for any other interpretation.

3. By saying “*God was in Christ*”, that rules out any possibility of any other god appeasing God the Father.

4. We can understand with little difficulty, Paul’s use of the two words ransom and price if we take into consideration the wide variety of metaphors he draws on to describe redemption. Paul draws on metaphors from the customs of his time:

a) Redemption and paying a ransom, we have already looked at buying back of a slave or a war captive.

b) From agriculture, sowing and watering (1 Cor 3:6-8), irrigation (1 Cor 12:13), grafting (Rom11:17-24), harvest, and in particular the first fruits of the harvest (Rom 8:23).

c) From commerce he took the word “seal” which is a visible mark of ownership (2Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13; 4:39). He also took the loan word used in Aramaic and Greek, ***arrabon***, which is the “first installment” and the guarantee of what was still to come (2 Cor 1:22;5:5; Eph 1:14).

d) The common expression “*in the name*” which is used in Baptism (1 Cor 1:13-15), occurs in many of the old papyrus deal with commerce and in particular transferring the ownership, (JM Moulton and G Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, 19330, page 35). All these and similar metaphors convey a great message that cannot be expressed except in a metaphor to guide the mind to the depth of God’s achievement in Christ.

5. When sinners “*become the righteousness of God”* in Christ, there is no room and no possibility for that to happen if we imagine that God the Father punished his Son or asked for his blood or that Jesus paid a price to God the Father. Here are the reasons:

a) If sinners are justified by grace and become possessors of the righteousness of God, this cannot happen as a result of appeasement or price or exchange of the sinners place with the Son because God the Father and God the Son because both Father and Son have the same Righteousness.

b) For sinners who are counted as having the Righteousness of the Holy God who has one and the same Holiness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, cannot become the Righteousness of God except by an act of infinite love and mercy.

c) Sin cannot divide the One and undivided Trinity. And that means not only as a matter of simple logic but also in the light of the great apostolic proclamation that nothing can separate us from the Love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord that is described in Romans 8:39. Consequently, nothing can separate the Father from the Son and in particular on the cross which put an end to our separation. No one should imagine that the end of our separation from God came as result of a separation of the Son from the Father because the Son is in the Father and that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself and this last word himself proves not only the presence of the Father in the Son on the cross but also that the Father was there to put an end to all forms of separation.

**Love or Wrath: Two Options, Where Do You Like to Stand?**

But before you read the two options ask yourself: what are your presuppositions?

**First option …**

Is that you see that divine love and mercy of God the Father did not demand any satisfaction or ransom from the Son because God the Father has no inner conflict that He needs someone external to Him to solve it and to remove His anger. Such a vision of love sees redemption working in us and for us but not to help God to get rid of His problem. Christ revealed to us the love of God and his justice by letting go of all sins and by abolishing death. God did not need someone who comes to save Him from His Wrath. In the same breath justification becomes an act of love and of communion with God that secures eternal life and is not a negative act by which God let go of our offenses at the expense of the life of His Son, who is called Beloved but was not treated as Beloved on the cross but fell under His Father’s judgment. Paul says that God was reconciling the world to himself, not imputing mankind’s trespasses to them (2 Cor 5:19). Here justice is healing and restoring, and holiness is given to us to be holy like God as we can’t be like him with our own works (Heb 12:10).

**Second option …**

Is that God is the God of wrath and the presupposition is that Holiness is hatred of sin and sinners. But God in Isaiah (Chapter 6) revealed himself to the prophet who was a sinner who said, *So I said: "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, The Lord of hosts*.” But God took away his sins. To all the great names of the men of faith in the OT they were all sinners (read Judges chapter 16 and reflect on Samson, who stayed the night with a prostitute in Gaza, but the Spirit of the Lord did not depart from him). Christ saved us from God and paid his blood as a price to redeem us from wrath or similar statements. This option misreads Isaiah 53 with the presupposition that it was the Father who was inflicting pain on His Son and also misreading Psalm 22:1.

**Appendix C –** **Cry of Innocence: *“Why have you forsaken me?”***

Those who like to speak of the Father’s anger or wrath on his son on the cross normally quote this first verse of Psalm 22:1. This is false, very false because Psalm 22 as a whole does not even hint to divine wrath. The Hebrew way of prayer is not the same as that of Christians living in the West.

Consider the common exclamation “Why?” In Psalm 2:1 we read, “*Why do the nations conspire, and the peoples plot in vain?* ***2*** *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and his anointed…”* This is quoted in Acts 4:25 as well as other Psalms quoted on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:25ff).

“The rise of the wicked against the righteous” is among the common themes of the Psalmists, *“Why, O LORD, do you stand far off? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble? In arrogance the wicked persecute the poor-- let them be caught in the schemes they have devised.”* (Psalm 10:1-2)

But this prayer does not end with the cry of the Psalmist but with:

*“****12*** *Rise up, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand; do not forget the oppressed.*

***13*** *Why do the wicked renounce God, and say in their hearts, "You will not call us to account"?* ***14*** *But you do see! Indeed you note trouble and grief, that you may take it into your hands; the helpless commit themselves to you; you have been the helper of the orphan.* ***15*** *Break the arm of the wicked and evildoers; seek out their wickedness until you find none.* ***16*** *The LORD is king forever and ever; the nations shall perish from his land.* ***17*** *O LORD, you will hear the desire of the meek; you will strengthen their heart, you will incline your ear* ***18*** *to do justice for the orphan and the oppressed, so that those from earth may strike terror no more.”*

Psalm 13 was sung in the Temple:

***1*** *“How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?* ***2*** *How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?* ***3*** *Consider and answer me, O LORD my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,* ***4*** *and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed"; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.*

***5*** *But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.*

***6***  *I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.”*

This does not say that God has actually forgotten David, but the crisis demands the revelation of God’s vindication.

The title of Psalm 18 reads: *A Psalm of David the servant of the Lord, who addressed the words of this song to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:*

***1*** *“I love you, O Lord, my strength.*

***2*** *The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,my God, my rock in whom I take refuge,my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*

***3*** *I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised;so I shall be saved from my enemies.*

***4*** *The cords of death encompassed me;the torrents of perdition assailed me;*

***5*** *the cords of Sheol entangled me;the snares of death confronted me.*

***6*** *In my distress I called upon the Lord;to my God I cried for help.From his temple he heard my voice,and my cry to him reached his ears.*

***7*** *Then the earth reeled and rocked;the foundations also of the mountains trembledand quaked, because he was angry.”*

This should help us to understand the same cosmic Phenomena at the Crucifixion of our Lord, the darkness and the earth quake.

It is futile for us to see in the “Cry of the Innocent” the sense of God hiding his face especially in the words of Psalm 26 where God’s vindication is the core of the prayer.

The most beautiful Psalm 27 has the same desire. It starts with:

***1*** *“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?*

But then the Psalmist prays:

***7*** *“Hear, O Lord, when I cry aloud,be gracious to me and answer me!*

***8*** *Come, my heart says, ‘seek his face!Your face, Lord, do I seek.*

***9*** *Do not hide your face from me.”*

The revelation of God and his hiddenness is what frightens a Hebrew, for his prayer or song is centered round seeking God’s grace and mercy, the ***Khesed****.*

We see a different scene when we read St. John Chrysostom’s “Homily 88,” an account of Matthew 27:45ff, where Jesus makes the Cry of Innocence:

***Matthew 27:45*** *"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.* ***46*** *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, and said, Eli, Eli, lima sabachthani?* *That is to say, my God my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* ***47*** *Some of them that stood there, when they heard that said, this man calleth for Elias [Elijah].*

***48*** *And straight away one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink.”* This is the sign which before He had promised to give them when they asked it, saying, "*An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas;*” meaning His cross, and His death, His burial, and His resurrection. And again, declaring in another way the virtue of the cross, He said, "*When ye have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall ye know that I am He."* And what He saith is to this purport: *"When ye have crucified me, and think ye have overcome me, then, above all, shall ye know my might."*

“For after the crucifixion, the city was destroyed, and the Jewish state came to an end, they fell away from their polity and their freedom, the gospel fourished, the word was spread abroad to the ends of the world; both sea and land, both the inhabited earth and the desert perpetually proclaim its' power.

“These things then He meaneth, and those which took place at the very time of the crucifixion. For indeed it was much more marvelous that these things should be done, when He was nailed to the cross, than when He was walking on earth. And not in this respect only was the wonder, but because from heaven also was that done which they had sought, and it was over all the world, which had never before happened, but in Egypt only, when the Passover was to be fulfilled. For indeed those events were a type of these.

“And observe when it took place. At midday, that all that dwell on the earth may know it, when it was day all over the world; which was enough to convert them, not by the greatness of the miracle only, but also by its taking place in due season. F or after all their insulting, and their lawless derision, this is done, when they had let go their anger, when they had ceased mocking, when they were satiated with their jeerings, and had spoken all that they were minded; then He shows the darkness, in order that at least so (having vented their anger) they may profit by the miracle. For this was more marvelous than to come down from the cross, that being on the cross He should work these things. For whether they thought He Himself had done it, they ought to have believed and to have feared; or whether not He, but the Father, yet *Chrysostom Homily 88, continued …*

thereby ought they to have been moved to compunction, for that darkness was a token of His anger at their crime. For that it was not an eclipse, but both wrath and indignation, is not hence alone manifest, but also by the time, for it continued three hours, but an eclipse takes place in one moment of time, and they know it, who have seen this; and indeed it hath taken place even in our generation.

”And how, you may say, did not all marvel, and account Him to be God? Because the race of man was then held in a state of great carelessness and vice. And this miracle was but one, and when it had taken place, immediately passed away; and no one was concerned to inquire into the cause of it, and great was the prejudice and the habit of ungodliness. And they knew not what was the cause of that which took place, and they thought perhaps this happened so, in the way of an eclipse or some natural effect. And why dost thou marvel about them that are without, that knew nothing, neither inquired by reason of great indifference, when even those that were in Judaea itself, after so many miracles, yet continued using Him despitefully, although He plainly showed them that He Himself wrought this thing.

“And for this reason, even after this He speaks, that they might learn that He was still alive, and that He Himself did this, and that they might become by this also more gentle, and He saith, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" that unto His last breath they might see that He honors His Father, and is no adversary of God. Wherefore also He uttered a certain cry from the prophet (Ps 22:1) even to His last hour bearing witness to the Old Testament, and not simply a cry from the prophet, but also in Hebrew, so as to be plain and intelligible to them, and by all things He shows how He is of one mind with Him that begat Him.

“But mark herein also their wantonness, and intemperance, and folly. They thought (it is said) that it was Elias whom He called, and straightway they gave Him vinegar to drink. But another came unto Him, and "*pierced His side with a spear.*" What could be more lawless, what more brutal, than these men; who carried their madness to so great a length, offering insult at last even to a dead body?

“But mark thou, I pray thee, how He made use of their wickednesses for our salvation. For after the blow the fountains of our salvation gushed forth from thence. "*And Jesus, when He had cried with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost."* This is what He *Chrysostom Homily 88, continued …*

said, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again," and, "I lay it down of myself." (John 10:18). So for this cause He cried with the voice, that it might be shown that the act is done by power. Mark at any rate saith, that "*Pilate marveled if He were already dead:*" and that the centurion for this cause above all believed, because He died with power.

“This cry rent the veil, and opened the tombs, and made the house desolate. And He did this, not as offering insult to the temple (for how should He, who saith, "*Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise,*" but declaring them to be unworthy even *Chrysostom Homily 88, continued …*

of His abiding there; like as also when He delivered it over to the Babylonians. But not for this only were these things done, but what took place was a prophecy of the coming desolation, and of the change into the greater and higher state; and a sign of His might.”

**The meaning of the cry**

“Why hast thou Forgotten me?” is a cry often used by David and others in times of oppression and distress. (See Psalm 42:9.)

Some have taken occasion from these words to depreciate the character of our blessed Lord. "*They are unworthy," say they, "of a man who suffers, conscious of his innocence, and argue imbecility, impatience, and despair.*" This is by no means fairly deducible from the passage. However, some think that the words, as they stand in the Hebrew and Syria, are capable of a translation which destroys all objections, and obviates every difficulty. The particle למה ***lamah***, may be translated, “to what - to whom - to what kind or sort - to what purpose or profit”: (Gen 25:32; Gen 32:29; Gen 33:15; Job 9:29; Jeremiah 6:20; Jeremiah 20:18; Amos 5:18); and the verb עזב ***azab*** signifies “to leave - to deposit - to commit to the care of.” (See Genesis 39:6; Job 39:11; Psalm 10:14, and Jeremiah 49:11). The words, taken in this way, might be thus translated:

“*My God! my God! to what sort of persons hast thou left me?”*

The words thus understood are rather to be referred to the wicked Jews than to our Lord, and are an exclamation indicative of the obstinate wickedness of his crucifiers, who steeled their hearts against every operation of the Spirit and power of God

**Mark the Alexandrian Deacon**

“By saying “why,” Jesus declared his innocence. No one who is guilty or is under the divine judgment can question God and ask God why? By saying “why have you forsaken me,” Jesus was quoting the opining of Psalm 22 that ends with the glory of the one who suffered.

“*‘Why have you forsaken me’* should then mean ‘why did you let me fall into the hands of those wicked men?’ If our Lord was severed from His Father, he could not have said to the good thief, “*today you shall be with me in paradise*” nor he could have said, “*Father into your hands I commit my spirit*.” Anyone who falls under divine judgment can’t give a place in paradise to a thief.”

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