

Justified by His Blood

Justice demands that law-breakers should be condemned while the innocent should be acquitted and set free. God underlines this basic principle by instructing judges to 'justify the righteous and condemn the wicked' (Deuteronomy 25:1).

How then should we understand this scripture, and in particular the statement, 'justified by his blood'? 'Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God' (Romans 5:9).

The 'justified' are believers in Jesus Christ, but as we all know, Christians are neither innocent nor sinless. Like unbelievers, they too break the Law of God. The most devout Christian humbly confesses with the rest of God's people, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us' (1 John 1:8). Yet God says that they are justified. The Divine Judge acquits them and sets them free from every penalty. Isn't that a breach of justice? Shouldn't they, being law-breakers, be condemned and punished?

Moreover, 'his blood' refers to the Son of God who was crucified on the cross. Now Jesus is immaculate, sinless, innocent, just; he is the Holy One of God. Why should he be killed? Jesus should have been justified; he should have never been put to death because he has always obeyed God's Law perfectly.

We cannot say that Christ's death was merely a murder or an injustice committed by evil men. It was more than that. The Bible says that 'it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief' (Isaiah 53:10). Jesus was 'delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God' (Acts 2:23). God planned his Son's death from eternity, and sent him to the world for that very purpose.

Why then did the Righteous die? What guilt was he carrying on his shoulders? His own? Most certainly not, for he was without sin. Whose sins, then?

Christ died for our sins! All who believe in him can joyfully say, 'God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:8). We admit that as sinners we deserve a sentence of condemnation and the punishment of death in hell forever. Instead God transferred our sins onto his Son and he was condemned and castigated instead of us. By his death Christ made satisfaction to the law and justice of God. That is why the Bible declares that we are 'JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD. God can justly free us from hell because our Saviour was punished by death in our place.

What do you see when you look back at the Man on the cross? Do you see your substitute dying for your sins? Can you honestly repeat the blessed words, 'I am justified by his blood'?