

• *Redemption in Christ Jesus*

We are justified as a gift, by his grace *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*. Paul has said that salvation is a matter of being clothed or covered by a righteousness that is not ours. Now he says this gift of a covering righteousness is ‘through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’. He is referring to the death of Jesus upon the cross.

Redemption

• *Means ‘the release of a slave by the paying of a price’*

Redemption. Paul has a particular word that he uses to describe what Jesus did on the cross; it is the word ‘redemption’. ‘Redemption’ means ‘the release of a slave by the paying of a price’. It is also a word used in Old Testament times of the payment that was needed to release an animal which should be slaughtered. It was also used of the payment made for a person in situations where he was liable to the death penalty. This is the kind of picture-language being used here. We may be ‘justified’ – released from condemnation and the death-penalty and declared righteous – through the price-paying of Jesus upon the cross.

(i) *Implies bondage*

There are four things, at least, involved in Paul’s using this word to speak of Jesus’ dying upon the cross for us. (i) It implies that we were in a bondage to guilt and condemnation. (ii) It implies that there is a way of release from the slavery we were in. The dying of Jesus released us by the payment of a price so that we could be ‘justified’, fully righteous in the eyes of God. (iii) It implies that our release from slavery was costly. Jesus ‘ransomed’ us. He paid a price that released us from our slavery, and that price was his death upon the cross. (iv) It implies that we are now free.

(ii) *Implies slavery*

(iii) *Implies costly release*

(iv) *Implies freedom*

Substitution

• *Jesus took our condemnation upon himself*

Substitution. How does justification – being declared righteous – come through the cross? Jesus ransomed us from condemnation by taking the condemnation upon himself. He was our substitute. The wrath of God fell on Jesus instead of falling on us. By his being willing to pay such a price Jesus ‘ransomed us away’ from condemnation. The human race was in the prison of guilt. We ought to be abandoned by God altogether. But suddenly we hear that a substitution has taken place. It is as though Jesus has sinned all of the sins of the entire human race. Our condemnation is transferred to him. He suffers ‘the curse of the law’¹. The entire human race is ‘in Christ’ as he dies for the human race upon the cross. It is for everyone. ‘All have sinned . . . being justified by his grace . . . through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus’.

¹ Galatians 3:13

A finished work

• *Ready and available*

A finished work to be received. Our salvation has been accomplished. We have been saved! But this salvation has to be endorsed, ratified, seconded. In some types of democratic meeting, if a motion is put before the meeting, nothing happens unless it is ‘seconded’. So it is with our salvation. It has been done! It is ready and available! The message is: ‘come for all things are ready’.

Propitiation

• *Means ‘a sacrifice which turns away anger’*

Propitiation. Paul goes on: ²⁵*God put him forward as a sacrifice to turn away anger, through faith and by means of blood.* ‘God put him forward’. The passage is like Galatians 3:1 which says God ‘placarded’ or ‘publicly portrayed’ Jesus on the cross. He has ‘put forward’ Jesus as the answer to the world’s need. God put him forward as ‘a sacrifice to turn away anger’. The Greek word is translated ‘propitiation’ in the Authorized Version of 1611. But few people know the meaning of ‘propitiation’ nowadays! It is an old word which means ‘a sacrifice which turns away anger’. The idea is that God was angry towards sin. He was determined to punish sin. But he put forward Jesus. Jesus carried our sins in his own body on the cross. It was as though Jesus were the sinner. God allowed the judgement for sin to come upon Jesus instead of coming upon us. So God’s anger against our sin was turned away because it fell on Jesus instead of falling upon us.

Faith

- Necessary to experience forgiveness

Blood

- An atoning sacrifice is necessary for forgiveness – the blood of God's Son

Vindication

- Of God's righteous character
- Sin is a foul, ugly blot on the universe
- God is holy, fair and righteous
- In the days before Jesus God had passed over 'the sins previously committed' – but with Jesus this is resolved

Faith. 'God put him forward as a sacrifice to turn away anger, **through faith**'. God's wrath against our sin will not **actually** be turned away until we believe. Forgiveness is there for us, but it will not be experienced unless we put our faith in Jesus Christ.

Blood. 'God put him forward as a sacrifice to turn away anger, through faith and **by means of blood**.' The Greek wording is not one phrase, 'through-faith-in-his-blood', but two phrases, 'through faith (and) by his blood'. The phrase emphasizes that the sacrifice that turned away God's wrath from us was a sacrifice-of-blood. When Israel was redeemed from the land of Egypt, the event that released them was the shedding of the blood of a lamb. Day by day in the tabernacle and later in the temple animals were sacrificed to make the same point. No blood, no atoning sacrifice. No atoning sacrifice, no forgiveness! This is what was needed for us to be 'justified', 'declared righteous' before God. The blood of the Son of God had to be shed. It had to be given to God. It has to be received by the people.

Vindication. God vindicates his character. *He did this to show his righteousness, because in the forbearance of God he had passed over the sins previously committed.* ²⁶ *This was for the purpose of showing his righteousness in the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the person who has the faithfulness of Jesus.* In the cross God was making a declaration. 'He did this to show his righteousness . . . ' 'Righteousness' must refer to the character of God, as the rest of the argument will show. The cross demonstrates God's justice. Sin is a foul, ugly blot on the universe. Is God unjust? Will sin go unpunished? And if God forgives sin, is God being unjust and allowing sin to go unpunished? None of this is true. Sin is punished! Jesus died and accepted the punishment of sin in his own person on the cross. It is a public declaration. God is utterly just and fair and righteous. Sin never goes unpunished. However, the punishment can be transferred, and it was transferred from the human race on to God's Son.

One special reason why God wished to declare his righteousness was because of the days before Jesus came. 'He did this to show his righteousness, **because of his passing over the sins previously committed.**' This time before the coming of Jesus was a time when many sins were committed. Yet God did not bring in the final judgement and end of the world. Many people had fellowship with him and their sins were 'passed over'. But after many centuries God sends his Son to the cross. 'It was for the purpose of showing his righteousness in the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the person who has the faithfulness of Jesus.' In the cross God hates sin, yet he makes a way of salvation for sinners.



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