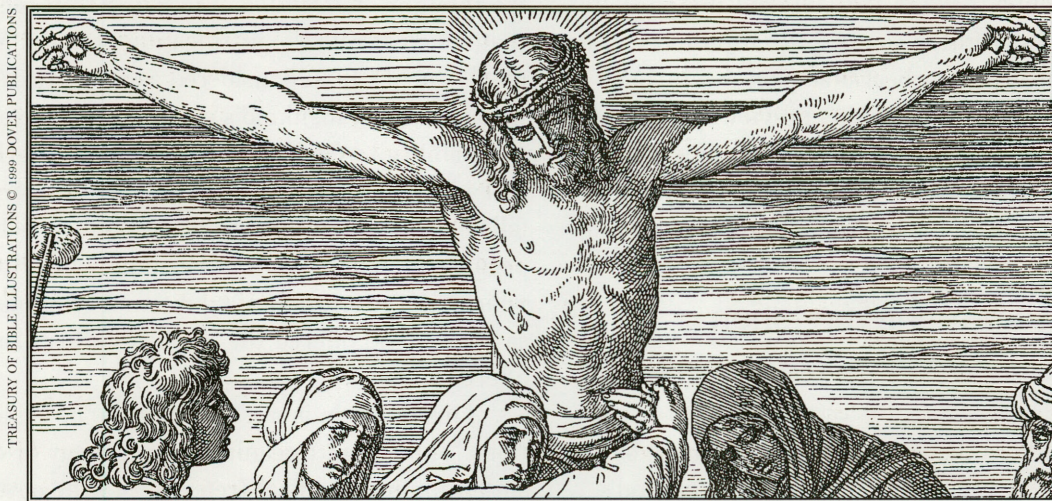


Why Jesus Died

A Reflection on Romans 3:25–26

By Ivan T. Blazen

The Mel Gibson film, *The Passion of the Christ*, with its blood spattering, pain-wrenching, soul-jarring scenes acutely raises the question: What is the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death? Different answers can be given.



Perhaps it is a meaningless event, as reflected in the despairing exclamation of the Emmaus travelers, “We had hoped [but now our hopes are vain] that he was the one to redeem Israel” (Luke 24:21). This view would not hold the field, for the resurrection of Jesus would overcome the apparent tragedy of Jesus' death and awaken reflection on the significance of his crucifixion.

Perhaps in all his suffering Jesus was experiencing not merely the wrath of

Rome on one the Romans considered a potential insurrectionist, but also the wrath of Almighty God exacted upon him so that the reality of God's punitive justice might be demonstrated, the claims of his broken law satisfied, his wrath appeased, and his forgiveness permitted.

Or perhaps his passion was not, in its core, an event external to God that changed him from wrath to peace, but an internal event in the life of God in which



he, in the person of his Son, absorbed and extinguished within himself the ultimate gravity and pain of sin.

By means of a study of Romans 3:25–26, a *locus classicus* on the meaning of Christ's death, I will seek to clarify some of the issues involved in interpreting the Cross. Hopefully this will encourage further reflection and discussion pro and con.

Here is the passage in its immediate setting according to the New Revised Standard Version, with a transliteration of key Greek terms.¹

21 But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, **22** the righteousness [*dikaioyne*] of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, **23** since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** they are now justified [*dikaioymenoi*] by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement [*hilasterion*] by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show [*endeixin*] his righteousness [*dikaioyne*], because [*dia*] in his divine forbearance [*anochē*] he had passed over [*pareisin*] the sins previously committed; **26** it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous [*dikaios*] and that he justifies [*dikaioynta*] the one who has faith in Jesus.

Issues of Interpretation

Setting the Stage

Romans 3:24–26,² as the theological center of the larger section 3:21–26, develops further the theme of God's saving righteousness first introduced in the programmatic verses 1:16–17 and reintroduced in 3:21 after a substantial excursus on human unrighteousness and the divine response of wrath and judgment (1:18–3:20).

The showing forth (*endeixis*) of God's righteousness in 3:25b–26, which is the purpose of the Cross, is connected with three major realities, denoted by the terms *justification*, *redemption*, and *sacrifice*, mentioned in 3:24–25a. What Paul is trying to say in explicating the meaning of the exhibition of God's righteousness is that humankind's being put right with God (justification) occurs through an act of liberation (redemption) from sin, which has taken place in Christ's sacrificial death (*hilasterion*). *Justification* (being put right with

God) is the key term, and it is Paul's answer to the unrighteousness of humankind described in 1:18–3:20. As a result of the revelation of his righteousness, God is shown to be righteous (just) and the one who puts right (justifies) the person of faith (3:26).

It needs to be pointed out that the terms *righteousness* and *righteous*, on the one hand, and *justification*, *justify*, and *just*, on the other, are all built upon the same Greek root, *dik*. Since the basic idea in Paul's usage has to do with "rightness," and because it would be helpful for English readers to understand that all these words are intimately related in meaning, it would be better to use the same English root for each of these terms and to translate "rightification" for justification, "rightify" instead of justify, and "righteous" instead of "just." This will be reflected in the course of this article.

Righteousness and Sacrifice, Wrath and the Passing Over of Sin

"Justified by his blood" (Rom. 5:19) pithily summarizes the thought of 3:24–25a. According to these verses, that which effects the justification of sinful humans is the Cross of Christ considered as a sacrifice (*hilasterion*), through which mankind's sin and guilt are expurgated and liability to God's wrath is therefore obviated. The idea of propitiation, whereby the primary emphasis falls on the appeasement of God's wrath, is basically a pagan notion and is not in harmony with Romans 3:25, which, in a revolution of traditional religious thought, says that God offered the sacrifice rather than it being offered to him.

This problem is not found in the possible translations "expiation," (meaning wiping away or cleansing sin), "atoning sacrifice" (referring to the covering of sin), or "mercy seat" (denoting the place where human sin is overcome by divine mercy). It is appealing to understand the Cross of Christ in the sense of mercy seat in Romans 3:25, since the word *hilasterion* refers explicitly to the mercy seat in twenty-two references in the Greek Old Testament. In particular, note Leviticus 16, which narrates the ceremonies of the Day of Atonement, as well as in Hebrews 9:5, which describes the various features of the ark in the Most Holy Place (compare Exod. 25:17–22).

In any case, in Romans 3:25 *hilasterion* centers upon Christ's sacrificial death on the Cross with its annulment of sin's guilt. By God offering this sacrifice it is clear that God's love is not the effect but the cause of Christ's sacrifice.

The efficacy of this sacrifice is to be received by faith (3:25a) and its purpose is to show God's righteousness vis-à-vis the passing over of former sins in the patience of God (3:25b). As a result of the revelation of God's righteousness (*dikaioyne*) at the Cross, God is seen to be righteous (*dikaios*) and the one who "rightifies" (*dikaioynta*) the one who has faith in Jesus (3:26).

To understand the thought of 3:25b–26 it is necessary to go back to 1:16–17, where it is stated that the proclaimed gospel powerfully leads to salvation (1:16) because in it God's righteousness is being revealed to people of faith (1:17). Three factors indicate that this

love or mercy (Ps. 89:14; 36:5–6, 10). This equation of righteousness with salvation, mercy, and love in Isaiah and the Psalms gives a biblical precedent to what is already clear from the contextual connections of righteousness in Romans 1–3.

Noting the salvific character of God's righteousness in 3:21–22, which resumes what 1:17 says, is of crucial importance for the interpretation of the righteousness of God in 3:25–26. Here Paul is bringing to a climax his argument about the manifestation of God's saving righteousness begun again in 3:21. He says that the purpose of Christ's sacrifice on the Cross was to

God's love is not the effect but the cause of Christ's sacrifice.

righteousness is a salvific rather than retributive reality.

First, it is the fundamental element of the good news that leads to salvation (1:16). Second, its reception depends on faith (as also in 3:22), whereas righteousness as retributive justice results from sinful works. Third, the revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel for persons of faith (1:17) stands over against, and is the answer to, the revelation of God's wrath from heaven against the unrighteousness of those who suppress the truth of God (1:18).

In like manner in 3:21, where Paul again takes up the theme of 1:17, the manifestation of God's righteousness (which is introduced by "But now" indicating a reversal of mankind's lostness) stands in contrast to the whole situation of sin, wrath, and judgment described in 1:18–3:20.

The salvific connotation of God's righteousness in Romans 1:17 comports with a significant class of usages in the Old Testament, where God's righteousness is synonymous with his salvation, deliverance, or vindication. Isaiah 46:13 states: "I bring near my deliverance [righteousness], it is not far off, and my salvation will not tarry: I will put salvation in Zion." Verses of the same import are Isaiah 51:5; 54:8; 56:1; 59:16; 61:10.

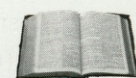
The synonymy is apparent, for God is one who "announces vindication [righteousness], mighty to save" (63:1). Indeed, God is "a righteous God, and a Savior" (45:21). Here "Savior" explicates "righteous." Similar texts are found in Psalm 24:15; 31:1; 40:10; 45:21; 51:14; 71:15; 98:2; and 143:11. In certain texts, God's righteousness is coordinated with his steadfast

display (some versions translate "demonstrate") God's righteousness.

What is spoken of here is not an abstract proof but a dynamic revealing in history of God's saving action. This is in line with the verbs used in Romans 1:17 and 3:21 for the revelation or manifestation of God's salvation. If a proof is involved, it is found in the pudding of God's redemptive activity in doing what was needed to save mankind.

Can God's righteousness in 3:25–26 mean something different than it did in 1:17 and 3:21–22 (as well as in the cognate word *rightification* or justification in 3:24)? A traditional, evangelical interpretation answers Yes, and instead of translating *dikaioyne* by "righteousness," as in 1:17 and 3:21–22, renders the word as "justice," referring to God's retributive justice that needed demonstration "because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished" (NIV).

According to this view, divine justice in past ages seemed asleep, and God appeared to be morally indulgent. His holiness and justice seemed compromised by his apparent failure to mete out the requisite punishment for sin. A signal proof of his retribution was needed to clear his character so that he might overcome when he was judged (compare Rom. 3:4). In this conception, the fundamental problem to be solved by the Cross, which would clear the way for forgive-



ness, was the satisfaction of the wrath of God.³

I do not see this as a correct view for a number of reasons. First, there can be no question, if one is studying Romans 3:25 in the wider context of 1:18–3:20, that the problem of God's wrath looms large. Christ as *hilasterion* (3:25) does bring an end to God's just wrath for those who believe. However, the rock bottom problem of 1:18–3:20 is not wrath (the effect of sin) but sin (the cause of wrath). If wrath is to be averted sin must be dealt with. The sacrifice of Jesus, by which he bears our sins, is God's answer to the sin problem (compare 8:3, where God sent Jesus "for us" that is, as a sin offering). Romans 5:9 says it well: "Having been justified now by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from wrath."

Second, there is no justification for translating *dikaioyne* here as (retributive) justice out of accord with the occurrences of the term in Romans 1–3 for God's saving righteousness, which contrasts with his wrath. It is clear: In Romans, God's righteousness is that which saves from God's wrath. God's righteousness is his covenant faithfulness by which he puts into effect his promise to be with his people and to deliver them. That God acts in consistency with the fact that he is righteous, or just (3:26), means not that he punishes, but that he is faithful even when his people are not (3:3).

In the third place, the view, as in the New International Version, that the Greek word *pareisis* in 3:25 means "left unpunished" in the sense of passing over in neglect, which by no means is the only or fundamental meaning of the word (see below), is not in harmony with Paul's argument in the early part of Romans. In 1:18–3:20, which begins with a forceful, thematic statement on the revelation of God's wrath (1:18), the sordid picture of universal human sin is painted, and the wrath that rightly falls upon such sin is pictured as past (1:24, 26, 28 under the figure "God handed them over"), present (1:18, "is being revealed"), and future (2:2, 5, 8–9).

When the conclusion of the matter is reached in 3:19–20, a judgment scene is presented in which every mouth is shut and the whole world stands guilty before God and, by way of implication, under sentence of death. Also, in 5:14 death reigned like a king from Adam to Moses (compare 5:21). If the wages of sin is death (6:23), this wage has been paid continually since the beginning of time. On Pauline presuppositions, apart from God's salvation in Jesus Christ, this death would have been eternal death (the "second

death" in the language of Rev. 20:6).

Thus, nothing in Romans prepares us for the idea that God has been, or has been perceived to be, lax toward sin. Quite the contrary, his wrath has been so evident that unless he intervenes redemptively mankind will be eternally lost. Like Romans 7:24, Romans 1:18–3:20 implicitly raises the pathetic cry, "Who will deliver me from this body of death?"

Furthermore, the Old Testament, which was the foundation of Paul's education and argumentation, is replete with stories of God's wrath and judgment, as for example, the story of the Flood. Also, in nearly six hundred uses of at least twenty different Old Testament words for wrath, God's righteous anger against human unrighteousness is declared. It can be seen, then, that both in terms of the context in Romans and the content of biblical history, so familiar to Paul, God has justly revealed his righteous wrath.

Therefore, it seems that what was needed at the Cross, as Paul in Romans is quite specifically arguing *his* case, is not so much a proof that God really punishes, as if that had been a rather scandalous question mark, but a dynamic manifestation of his saving power for an entire world lost under sin and wrath. What was required was to see that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor. 5:19).

Fourth, even if God's passing over of sin refers to the period before Christ, this does not automatically support the interpretation that God seemed to be unjust because he did not punish properly, and what was needed to safeguard his reputation was an evidence that he did.⁴

There are other possibilities. One is that God passed over sin in the sense that in his redemptive plan the time had not yet come for him to deal decisively with sin in terms of Christ's sacrifice, which, in contrast to the insufficiency of the sacrificial cultus of the Old Testament, was alone the foundation of all forgiveness throughout all time. A second is that passing over human sin, instead of irrevocably blotting out the entire race, was a promise of mercy to come at the Cross of Christ. Besides, God's patience was meant to lead to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

It seems clear that the passing over of sin in God's patience in Romans 3:25 should be viewed not in a negative but a positive light. It refers not to God's justice asleep but to God's mercy alive. Passing over sin is not a problem that demands a solution, but part

of the solution to the existing problem of human sin and its result, divine wrath.

The fact is that although *paresis*, which occurs only here in the New Testament and never in the Greek Old Testament, could in classical times carry the meaning of “neglect,” the idea taken up in the NIV, it more fundamentally meant “letting go,” “dismissal,” or “remission” of a debt, as also is the case with the verbal equivalent, *pariemi*.⁵ It is this latter meaning that is most suitable to the flow of Paul’s thought in Romans 1–3, where God’s wrath against sin is succeeded by God’s atoning sacrifice for sin.

It seems clear that the total independence of God’s salvation from the legal system . . . renders suspect the imposition of legal or forensic concepts on the meaning of Christ’s sacrifice.

In harmony with this, it is possible that *paresis*, far from meaning a neglect really to punish sin *before* the Cross, which made God seem indifferent to sin, may refer to a remission of sins *at* the Cross (*paresis* therefore being synonymous with *aphesis*, which means forgiveness). This is the interpretation favored by the King James Version, which translates “to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.”

According to this view, in which the preposition *dia* before *paresin*, rather than being retrospective and causal “because of,” (as in the NRSV), would be either prospective, “with a view to,” “for” (KJV) or instrumental, “through,” or “by,”⁶ the Cross is the time when God, through the atoning sacrifice of Christ, provides forgiveness for mankind’s sins from the beginning of time. He does this in his patience, that is, mercy (patience or forbearance being used sometimes in biblical and extrabiblical writings in the sense of mercy; see, for example, Exod. 34:6).⁷

According to Romans 2:4, God’s forbearance (*anochē*) is connected not with a possible charge against God, but with “the riches of his kindness.” It is of interest to note that in Micah 7:18–20 the concept of passing over sin is equated with God’s forgiveness of sin, and all of this is part of the exhibition of God’s faithfulness, another way of speaking of God’s righteousness.

In the interpretation being offered here (whether “passing over” refers to the time before or at the Cross), when Romans 3:26 speaks of God being just or righteous and the justifier or “rightifier” of those who believe,

both of the *dikaiois* words in this text are to be seen as referring to God’s saving action. The meaning, then, is that in the Cross of Christ God is seen to be righteous, that is, faithful to his covenant promises (God’s faithfulness in Rom. 3:3 is paralleled by his righteousness *dikaioisynē* in 3:5), in that he provides the sacrifice that delivers from sin and wrath, and is the “rightifier” (justifier) of the believer, that is, the one who applies the efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice to the one who has faith.

Thus, there is in this text no antithesis between justice and mercy, as traditionally thought. The statement rather than being antithetic is synthetic. It

completes the thought in 3:26b that God is righteous (= one who justifies, “rightifies,” saves). The additional thought tells who he puts right: people of faith.

The virtue of this interpretation is twofold. First, the righteousness words, each of which is connected with the concept of something being revealed or shown, are all seen to have the same basic meaning, a salvific one, rather than the noun in 3:25 and the adjective in 3:26 suddenly changing in their significance. Second, full justice is still done to the fact that Christ, as the *hilasterion* of God, demonstrates the unconditional love of God, expiates the rebellious sin of man, and obviates the deserved wrath of God. He does this, as other texts declare, by being made sin (a sin offering) for us (Rom. 8:13) and by himself bearing our sins in his body on the tree (1 Pet. 2:24).

A last and very significant support for the salvific rather than retributive connotation of God’s righteousness in Romans 3:25 is that the immediate context says it is “apart from the law” (3:21). But God’s righteousness as retributive justice, if that is the meaning in 3:25, cannot be “apart from the law”; it is the law in punitive operation. As Romans 4:15 declares: “The law brings wrath.”

It seems clear that the total independence of God’s salvation from the legal system, spoken of in Romans 3:21, renders suspect the imposition of legal or forensic concepts on the meaning of Christ’s sacrifice.



Suffering as the Foil for Redemption

By Ivan T. Blazen

Although many negative evaluations of *The Passion of the Christ* have been made, what is positive in the film overshadows the negative.

I saw the depth of Jesus' suffering as the foil for the film's portrayal of the redemptive love of Christ for all. If we focus on Jesus' torment just for itself we would not have a correct view of him or what he was about.

However, the meaning of his suffering is not primarily his physical anguish and death, but that which is cradled in these realities. Jesus' extreme agony is the prelude to his repeated words in the film: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

As the dying Christ is nailed to the cross in Gibson's portrayal, he utters a prayer of forgiveness for the Romans pounding the nails. While on the Cross, he prays this prayer again, and this time its application has special relevance to Jews in the person of their high priest, for one of the malefactors hanging next to Jesus says to the high priest passing below, "He prayed for *you*."

Here at the Cross are concentrated all the world's misunderstanding and blindness, as well as the malignity and sin of everyone, and, in Christ's dying, they are borne, transcended, and resolved.

At the same time, Satan, the wispy figure present everywhere, is vanquished. Satan had contended in Gethsemane that Jesus could not bear the load of the world's sin, but just as Jesus stomps on the head of the snake that issues forth from Satan, so Jesus endures all the way. The film cites as its fundamental premise wording from Isaiah 53: "By his stripes we are healed." Because this is so, Jesus is Victor over the evil one.

Symbolically, the camera moves slowly upward while looking down upon the scene of the crucifixion, which is given a circular form. Suddenly, the camera does the same with a scene in which Satan is on his knees, howling in torment in the middle of a circular floor. Clearly the two circles are one, and the Cross is the place where humankind is forgiven and the power of evil defeated. This happens through the very means by which the evil one sought to defeat Jesus—suffering.

This, at rock bottom, is what I saw with my mind's eye, as my physical eyes teared up at what I perceived to be the film's essential truth.

If God's righteousness is apart from the law, this means that God acts with absolute freedom in dispensing his grace. He is not bound by legal categories.

He supercedes these categories, as implied in Philippians 3:8–9, where Paul says he wants to gain Christ and be found in him, not having his own righteousness that comes from the law, but a righteousness from God derived from faith in Christ. The freedom of God's salvific action is expressly stated in Romans 3:24, which declares that God justifies believers freely by his grace.

Theological Conclusions

On the basis of the discussion above we may say that there is nothing outside of God that moves him to be gracious, not even the sacrifice of Jesus. In a fundamental departure from traditional ideas of sacrifice, Romans 3:25 pictures God as offering the sacrifice, not as being the recipient of it. God was in the sacrificial death of Jesus, reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor. 5:19). There is no separation between God and Jesus, as is implied in the idea that God is punisher and Christ the punished. God's saving righteousness is "apart from the law," but the Father is not apart from the Son in the work of salvation and experience of redemptive suffering.

This means that in the death of Jesus, God—the one against whom all sin ultimately is committed⁸—bears the burden and pain of sin within himself and offers us the pardon. This is not about God undergoing punishment, but about the pain of self-sacrificing love taking all that is wrong into itself. True, there was an old rugged cross on a hill far away, but fundamentally the Cross is *in* the heart of God, not outside it.

In every act of true forgiveness, whether divine or human, there is a cross, the injured party suffering, absorbing, and exhausting the injury within himself and extending to the injurer grace and life. In this way, the one injured substitutes for the injurer and acts sacrificially on his behalf.⁹ In such an interpretation, applied to God, the concept of the substitutionary, sin-bearing sacrifice of Christ is maintained, but in a new key.

And, let it be said, God's holiness, his absolute opposition to evil, is also maintained. When God, as it were, swallows the painful depths of human sin, undergoing what may be called the agony of forgiveness,¹⁰ sin is seen for the wrong it really is—a strike against divine love—and it is judged and condemned (Rom. 8:3) in the very act of being extinguished.¹¹

Romans 3:25–26 is not a theory of atonement in which a misunderstood God has to prove he punishes, but an announcement of the good news of God's abounding grace toward sinners. God himself, in the person of his son, bears and extinguishes our sins against him, and thus we can forever say: "Free at last, free at last. Thank God Almighty, I'm free at last."

Notes and References

1. The NRSV is used throughout this paper unless otherwise indicated.

2. It is commonly thought in contemporary scholarship that these verses contain a Jewish Christian confession of faith that Paul adapted for his own purposes.

3. See, for example, James I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1973), 169–170; and John Stott, *Romans* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 116. Furthermore, after claiming that "God himself gave himself to save us from his wrath" (ibid., 115), Stott (115–16) quotes approvingly from C. E. B. Cranfield, who says that God, in willing to forgive righteously, "purposed to direct against his own very Self in the person of his Son the full weight of that righteous wrath which they deserved." *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, International Critical Commentary*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: T & T Clark: 1974, 1979), 1: 217. We have here the concept of divine self-propitiation.

4. Sometimes Acts 17:30–31 is invoked to support the view that God was open to the charge of disregarding rather than dealing in justice with human sin. The text says that God overlooked the times of human ignorance, but now commands everyone to repent because he has appointed a day when he will judge the world by Jesus Christ. I consider the idea that this text is parallel to Romans 3:25 to be incorrect. Acts 17:30 does not in any way suggest that God was open to a charge against his justice by overlooking human ignorance. I think he would be open to a charge if he dealt with ignorance as if it were knowledge.

This text, as well as the context within which it is set (cf. v. 23), contrasts the time of ignorance with the time of revelation. The gospel revelation of the reality of God as Creator was meant to overcome ignorance, and therefore is the basis for a call to repentance, that is, a turning to the true God. Repentance after revelation, rather than retribution upon Christ at the Cross, is the solution that this text presents for the times of ignorance. Furthermore, this call to repentance is set in relation to the judgment at the end of time.

This complex of ideas has nothing to do with the interpretation of Romans 3:25 that sees God at the Cross bringing retribution upon Christ to prove that he was not unjust in passing over

previous sin without punishment.

5. Compare Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, new ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), 1337, 1340; Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3 vols., (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1990–1993), 3:39; Werner Georg Kümmel, "Παρεσις and ενδειξις: A Contribution to the Understanding of the Pauline Doctrine of Justification," in vol. 3 of the *Journal for Theology and the Church*, ed. Robert W. Funk (Tübingen and New York: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck] and Harper and Row, 1967), 3–4.

6. The prospective view of *dia* is illustrated by Romans 4:25 (Christ was put to death to deal with our sins and was raised to effect our justification). The instrumental understanding is exhibited in Revelation 12:11; 13:14; John 6:57; Romans 8:20. See William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Chicago and Cambridge: University of Chicago Press and Cambridge University Press, 1957), 180, B II 4, and Kümmel, "Παρεσις," 10.

7. For references to the relevant texts, see Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, ed. and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1980), 99–100; and Ulrich Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer*, (Röm 1–5), Vol. VI/1 of *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament* (Zurich and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Benziger Verlag and Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 197.

8. Compare Psalms 51:3, "Against you and you alone have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight."

9. In terms of human experience, which can sometimes be a good analogy for what happens on the divine level, Scott Peck, in part quoting Gale D. Webbe, (*The Night and Nothing*, 109), makes the following relevant comments: "The only ultimate way to conquer evil is to let it be smothered within a willing, living human being. When it is absorbed there like blood in a sponge or a spear into one's heart, it loses its power and goes no further.'...

"The healing of evil ... can be accomplished only by the love of individuals. A willing sacrifice is required. The individual healer must allow his or her own soul to become the battleground. He or she must sacrificially *absorb* the evil." M. Scott Peck, *The People of the Lie* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 269.

10. See H. R. Makintosh, *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness* (London: Nisbet, 1951), 216.

11. Note ibid., 198–206.

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