

Do You Need An Attorney?

Do I need an attorney? Perish the thought! That would mean that I have a problem that I cannot handle myself. It would mean that I am culpable, or in danger of great loss, even to being assigned to Death Row. There must be a gathering of facts in my favor and/or defense for a convincing presentation of my case. The system is so complicated that I cannot stand before the judge alone but must depend upon one more qualified than I. I haven't enough money in my account to pay for an attorney's services. Can I even trust the lawyer to devote himself fully in my interest?

Yes, I am in desperate need of an attorney because of my condemning behavior. To my great advantage, due to my poverty, I have a court-appointed defender to stand before the judge in my place at no cost to me.

When he created you and me, he glorified us with some of his own likeness and freedom of choice. We violated that trust, alienating ourselves from our Maker so that now we must answer to him as our Judge. God loves us and wants us all to be reconciled, but his integrity would be violated if he just overlooked our sins. The sting of sin is death. We face that penalty as we stand before the Judge. Added to that, we have no standing before the Court. We are aliens. If we should own the whole world, we would have nothing to give in exchange for our lives. We are penniless in merit.

Moved by his love for his creature, God determined to become a man, taking on himself all the venomous, deathly sting of sin in the place of his creatures. As Son of God and son of man he gave himself as a mediation. He stood before the Father as our proxy allowing his vicarious death to plead our case. Symbolically, we place ourselves with him in that experience in our baptism (Rom. 6:3-4).

In the presence of the Judge, our Counselor brings his client. He explains to the Court that his client, though a life-long sinner, is accounted as innocent due to the fact that he, the Advocate, accepted the penalty himself. Does not that violate the integrity of God to remit the penalty of sin? It was not disregarded; it was paid in full measure! How, then, can the guilty be dismissed as justified before the Court? Because he, though guilty, is credited as being righteous by the merit of the Mediator, the Advocate, the Intercessor who gave himself for us.

What is the condition or obligation of the one being reconciled? He can do nothing to enhance the atonement made for him. He accepts the free gift of justification by obedient faith and dedication to him who brought him to God.

John assures us, "My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous..." (1 John 2:1). An **advocate** (*parakletos*) is one "called to one's side." Vine elaborates: "It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defense, an advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1 John 2:1, of the Lord Jesus." The word is rendered **Comforter** in references like John 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7 in which Jesus, our advocate was promising to return to be with them in the person of another advocate / comforter / counselor / intercessor, the Holy Spirit.

The plea of the atonement still intercedes in our behalf else we would be aliens separated from God again. This is not a **pleading** or **begging** of the Father on the part of

the Son or the Holy Spirit as though the Father is less loving and forgiving than the Son. Must God plead with God? (See *Free To Speak*, Ch. 1). Jesus himself is our plea, our justification, the one who stand in our place before the Court of heaven. “For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14).

“Consequently he is able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them” (Heb. 7:25).

Jesus has gone “...into heaven itself, now to **appear** in the presence of God **on our behalf**. Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly... . But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the age **to put away sin** by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is **appointed for men to die once**, and after that comes **judgment**, so **Christ**, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, **will appear** a second time, **not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him**” (Heb. 9:24-28).

Because of our guilt, it was appointed that we die and then be judged. But Jesus filled that appointment of death for us and he stands before the Judge in our stead. When he comes to receive us, it will not be to deal with our sin. He has already done that! It will not be to face God in judgment. He has already stood there as our Mediator, Intercessor, Attorney, Counselor, and Comforter and has cleared our case before the eternal Court of justice and mercy – justified and forgiven!

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him “ (John 3:16f).

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