

GUILTY OR INNOCENT?

HOW DO YOU PLEA?

Most of us have lived long enough to have experienced being absolutely innocent, but yet no one has ever believed us. We are innocent of some charge against us, and we are innocent and we know we are, but no one else does.

Now, there are also many, many criminals in jail, and **there is not one that doesn't say "I am innocent. I was framed, and I do not belong here."** And yet all the jails are still filled with so-called innocent people.

So those who are not innocent say they are innocent, and they really are not innocent. But yet when an innocent man and a guilty man end up in jail, the cry is the same, "We are innocent." One is and the other isn't. **But you could never convince the jailer that you are innocent, even if you are, because he hears it all the time.** "I am innocent. I am innocent." And so consequently when an innocent man says he is innocent, it falls on deaf ears.

So who knows who is innocent and who is guilty? Three men on the cross, two of them were guilty and One of them is innocent. But the innocent One is still there with the guilty. One of the guilty thieves on the cross recognizes that One of them on the cross is innocent, and declares that he and the other thief are guilty. He states that they deserve to be there, capital punishment by hanging by the Romans in that day. **And he also says that the One in the middle is innocent, and doesn't belong there.**

Now all three are there and society and the law of the land at that time say all three are guilty. But One isn't guilty. **Who has all the facts? Who knows who is innocent and who know who is guilty?** Even though law and order sometimes don't know because **they do not have all the facts, because they are not omniscient.**

Well, God the Father knows that the One in the middle, His Son, is innocent. **But knowing He is innocent, He punishes Him and judges Him and doesn't spare His life and the One in the middle faces capital punishment.** Why? Why did the two thieves on the cross deserve to die, and the One in the middle didn't deserve to die? Why did the God of the universe allow an innocent man to be crucified? Was that fair? Was that a fair representation of jurisprudence? **Knowing that His only begotten Son was innocent, and yet He judged Him and sentenced Him to death? Why?**

For you and you and you. The Just for the unjust. The Innocent for the guilty. Every maltreatment of innocent people in the world manifests the ultimate in an innocent Person being judged, being judged even through He was innocent and didn't deserve to die. Why? Why death? Why the cross? Why the innocent One? What is the wisdom, the reasonableness, of this malfeasance of justice? How did the highest court in the land justify the death of an innocent man? **If God is fair and just and righteous and love and veracity, how could He do this to this innocent Son of His? What was in His mind at the time? Why Christ?**

"He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "God, who spared not His only begotten Son, but freely delivered Him up for all of us, how will He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

"All we like sheep have turned astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are drawn together." "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him."

"I find no fault in Him." I find no fault in Him. This man is innocent. "I find no fault in Him. I wash my hands of this innocent man's blood."

Guilty or not guilty. God reconciled the whole world to Himself for those who accept Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. And we are now found in Christ, not

having our own righteousness, but the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Buddy Dano, Pastor

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