

## *Models for Understanding Justification*

In Romans and in his other letters Paul seems to draw on different images to explain how the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ can justify people, or make them right with God (Rom. 3:24–26, 30; 4:24–5:1; 5:9, 16–21; cf. 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 2:21; 3:11–14).

- *Substitution*. All people are guilty of not living as God requires, and the penalty is (eternal) death; Jesus is completely innocent but dies on the cross to take the penalty for everyone else (see Rom. 3:23–24; 5:6–8; 6:23).
- *Redemption*. People are like slaves, owned by some hostile power (sin, death, the devil); the purchase price for freedom is the blood of Christ, and God pays this so that people can now belong to God (see Rom. 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; 6:20; 7:23).
- *Reconciliation*. People have been unfaithful to God in ways that have severely damaged the divine-human relationship; Jesus comes as the mediator and offers his own life to restore the broken relationship (see Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18–20).
- *Atonement*. People have sinned against God, who demands sacrifices of blood to nullify the consequences of sin; Jesus dies on a cross to offer one supreme sacrifice for the sins of all (see Rom. 3:25).
- *Participation*. People live under the power of sin and death, and the only way out is to die and rise to new life. Through baptism, people are united with Christ, participating in his death and (ultimately) in his resurrection (see Rom. 6:1–11; Gal. 2:19–20).