

God Decrees Your Holiness
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Psalm 93:5 reads: "Your decrees are very trustworthy; holiness befits your house, O LORD, forevermore."

If we want to understand this verse, we ought to understand what the word "decrees" here means. The Hebrew word is "edah", and it normally gets translated as decree, or witness, or testimony. In English, a decree is a public statement of reality - if I decree X, then that means that X is the way it is. Witness and Testimony also are official, solid, real things. (In fact, the Greek gives "martyria" - the word that means witness, and from which we get the word martyr.)

Well, that's all nice, but what's the point of this? In the Old Testament times, if you were to enter into the temple, into the LORD's house, you had to be cleansed and sanctified - you had to be forgiven and declared holy. And this was done and declared and pronounced by the priests who oversaw all the sacrifices. They bore public witness, they decreed (following what the LORD had command them) that people were clean and ready to participate in the holy things and the holiness of God.

Things are not that different in the New Testament times, because you too have been declared and decreed to be clean and justified by the blood of Christ Jesus - you have been justified. You have been declared and decreed to be holy - you have been sanctified. You are baptized - and because you have been baptized and declared and decreed to be a child of God, you have access to God's holy house as His holy child.

And this is trustworthy. The Word of God that decrees that you are forgiven and holy in God's sight is sure and solid, indeed more sure and solid than anything we come across in this life. This is what God has said of you in your Baptism; it is trust worthy and true.

As this new year begins, face all things, the ups and downs, the trials and the joys, remembering what God has decreed concerning your forgiveness and His great love for you. Have a blessed new year!