

LESSON EIGHT

THE ATONEMENT

A. THE MEANING OF THE ATONEMENT.

Scriptural Reference:

"And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).

The whole doctrine of salvation is built upon the atonement, which is accomplished in the sacrificial death of Christ. If man could have been saved in any other way, Christ would never have died the atoning death on Calvary. As a study of the atonement is made, it can be seen just what God did in providing salvation for fallen man. The account of what He did, the incarnation, the ministry of Christ on earth, the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, is found in the four Gospels. A study of the book of Acts will reveal what man must do to be able to receive what God has provided for him.

B. THE ORIGIN OF THE ATONEMENT.

Scriptural References:

"But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (I Peter 1:19-20).

"... Whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8).

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

1. ORDAINED IN HEAVEN.

In the plan and mind of God, Calvary was from the very beginning. It is significant to note the difference of meaning in the two phrases: "before the foundation of the world" and "from the foundation of the world." The term "foundation of the world" is referring not to the creation of the universe but the chaotic condition that came into being with the fall of man. It has reference to this world system, which is controlled by the spirit of iniquity and rebellion.

Before the fall of man took place God had ordained the plan of salvation in a lamb being slain. However, no benefit could be derived from this until there was a need for salvation. From that point on Jesus became a slain lamb, and all could, with faith, look forward to Calvary.

2. INSTITUTED ON EARTH.

When God clothed Adam and Eve, blood was shed. This was the beginning of the crimson line of sacrifice that runs through the entire Bible.

C. THE NECESSITY OF THE ATONEMENT.

1. GOD'S HOLINESS AND MAN'S SINFULNESS.

The necessity of the atonement is based upon the facts of God's holiness and man's sinfulness. The reaction of God's holiness against man's sinfulness is known as His WRATH, which may be averted by the atonement.

Sin is violence done to the constitution, so as to speak, under which God and man live, just as unfaithfulness does violence to the covenant under which man and wife live. Sin is essentially an attack on God's honor and holiness. It is a rebellion against God. When a man willfully sins he chooses his own will rather than God's and for the time being becomes a law unto himself. But should God permit His honor to be attacked, He would then cease to be God. His honor calls for the destruction of the one resisting Him; His righteousness demands satisfaction of the violated law; and his holiness reacts against sin, this reaction being described as WRATH.

God's wrath is governed by personal considerations; He is not hasty to destroy the work of His hands. He pleads with man; He waits to be gracious. He delays judgment in the hope that His goodness shall lead man to repentance. However, man misunderstands the Divine. Man delays and scoffs at the thought of judgment.

The crucifixion revealed the awfulness of sin and pictured the dread penalty upon it. The Cross of Jesus declares that He never was, is not, and never can be indifferent to man's sin.

2. SEPARATION FROM GOD.

Scriptural Reference:

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).

God is holy in nature which means that He is righteous in character and conduct. In order to maintain fellowship with God it is necessary to be holy.

Man's sin has broken that fellowship and created a great gulf between God and man. The atonement is the bridge that spans that gulf. The AT-ONE-MENT restores fellowship with God.

3. THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.

Scriptural Reference:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The judgment of sin is death. Life is in the blood and when blood is spilled, life is given. This explains the necessity of shed blood for the remission of sins.

When blood is shed it actually is the giving of life. Therefore, the wages of sin is being paid.

D. REDEMPTION.

The word "redeem" in both the Old and New Testaments mean:

- (a). To buy back by the paying of a price.
- (b). To loose from bondage by the paying of a price.
- (c). To buy in a market and to take from a market.

Jesus is a Redeemer and His atoning work is described as redemption.

A redeemer must have the following qualifications:

- (a). He must be kin to the man.
- (b). He must be willing to redeem or buy back.
- (c). He must have the price.

Jesus measured up to all three of these qualifications. *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (I Peter 1:18-19). "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." (I Corinthians 6:20).*

We are bought with a price. What is the price that was paid? There is only one answer: the blood of Jesus shed on Calvary's Cross.

Study the following references: Leviticus 25:47-49; Matthew 20:28; Galatians 3:13; Titus 2:14; and Revelation 5:9.

E. RECONCILIATION.

Scriptural References:

"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself..." (II Corinthians 5:18-19).

"... We were reconciled to God by the death of His Son..." (Romans 5:10).

"And you...yet now hath he reconciled" (Colossians 1:21).

The Apostle Paul does not say that God was reconciled to man, but that God did something in order to reconcile man to Himself. This act of reconciliation is a finished work; it is a work that has been done in the interests of men so that in the sight of God the entire world is already reconciled. It remains for the evangelist to proclaim it and the individual to receive it. Christ's death has made the reconciliation of all mankind possible; each individual must make it actual.

LESSON EIGHT

SELF HELP TEST

A. Explain the difference between the two terms "Before the foundation of the world" and "from the foundation of the world" in reference to the atonement.

B. When was the atonement instituted on earth?

D. Name the THREE qualifications of a redeemer.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

D. Explain clearly why it took the shedding of blood to atone for sin.