

LESSON NINE

THE ATONEMENT (Continued)

A. THE EFFICACY OF THE ATONEMENT.

The meaning of the word "efficacious" is "producing or sure to produce a desired result." What does the atonement produce?

1. PARDON OF TRANSGRESSIONS.

Study the following references: John 1:29; John 5:24; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:22-28 and Revelation 1:5.

2. FREEDOM FROM SIN.

Not only free from the guilt of sin but also free from the power of sin. Romans 6:14.

3. DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH.

Death is the result of sin. *"That he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9). "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John 11:26).*

4. GIFT OF EVERLASTING LIFE.

"...Should not perish, but have eternal life...should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:14-16).

5. VICTORIOUS LIFE.

Christ conquered Satan on our behalf. Christians have the VICTORY over the devil as long as they have the VICTOR over the devil.

Study the following references: Luke 10:17-20; Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 2:15 and Revelation 12:11.

B. THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

The word "atonement" in the Hebrew means literally "to cover," and is translated in our Authorized Version by the following words: make atonement, purge, purge away, reconcile, make reconciliation, pacify, pardon, to be merciful, put off.

Atonement includes the covering of both the sins and the sinner. To atone for sin is to cover sin from God's sight so that it loses its power to provoke His wrath.

Study the following references: Psalm 78:38; Psalm 79:9 and Leviticus 5:18.

When the blood was applied to the altar by the priest the Israelite was assured that the promise made to his forefathers would be realized for him. *"And when I see the blood I will pass over you"* (Exodus 12:13).

What were the effects of the atonement or covering?

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| 1. Blotted out | - Jeremiah 18:23, Isaiah 43:25. |
| 2. Removed | - Isaiah 6:7. |
| 3. Covered | - Psalm 32:1. |
| 4. Cast into the depths of the sea | - Micah 2:19. |
| 5. Cast behind God's back | - Isaiah 38:17. |
| 6. Pardoned | - Psalm 78:38. |

C. SUBSTITUTION.

Scriptural References:

"For he hath made him to be sin for us" (II Corinthians 5:21).

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (I Peter 2:24).

The sacrifices of the Old Testament were substitutionary in nature; they were reckoned as doing on the altar for the Israelite what he could not do for himself. In like manner Jesus did for us on the cross what we could not do for ourselves. Having taken human nature, He was able to identify Himself with mankind and so suffer their penalty. He died in our stead; He took the penalty that was ours, in order that we might escape it. One who was sinless by nature and who had never committed a sin in His life, became a sinner (or took the sinner's place).

Just as the ram caught in the thicket was a substitution of Isaac on Mount Moriah, even so was Christ a substitution for us. Just as Barabbas was set free by the death of Christ, even so may we be set free. Read and study carefully Isaiah, chapter fifty-three.

D. PROPITIATION.

The word "propitiation" is believed to come from a Latin word "prope" meaning "near." A sacrifice of propitiation brings man near to God, reconciles him to God by atoning for his transgressions and winning Divine favour and grace. To propitiate is to appease the righteous wrath of a holy God by the offering of an atoning sacrifice. Christ is described as such a propitiation (Romans 3:25, I John 2:2). Sin keeps man at a distance from God but Christ has so dealt with sin on man's behalf that man may now "draw nigh" to God "in His name."

The word "propitiation" in Romans 3:25 is the same word in the Greek used to translate the word "mercy seat." In both Hebrew and Greek the word conveys the thought of an atoning sacrifice.

The consistent Bible view is that the sin of man incurred the wrath of God. The wrath is averted only by Christ's atoning sacrifice. From this standpoint his saving work is properly called propitiation.

All sin must be judged and it is here that the sins of all mankind have been judged. Christ paid the full penalty for the sins of every man. If our sins are not judged here, they will be judged at the White Throne Judgement (Revelation 20:11-15).

E. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ATONEMENT.

The incarnation was for the purpose of the atonement. Jesus partook of flesh and blood in order that He might die. He was manifested to take away our sins (I John 3:5, Hebrews 2:14). Christ came into the world to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). The faith of the atonement presupposes the faith of the incarnation. The incarnation is certainly a declaration of the purpose on the part of Jesus to save the world, but how was the world to be saved if not through the atonement?

The atonement is the scarlet cord running through every page in the entire Bible. Cut the Bible anywhere and it bleeds. One out of every forty-four verses in the New Testament speaks of the atonement and the death of Christ is mentioned one hundred and seventy-five times.

The importance of the atonement may be seen by the fact that:

1. Moses and Elijah were interested in the death of Christ (Luke 9:30).
2. The Old Testament prophets searched deeply into this great subject (I Peter 1:11).
3. The theme of the song in heaven is that of Christ's death (Revelation 5:8-12).

F. UNSCRIPTURAL VIEWS OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

To some minds the death of Christ was just the death of a martyr. To others Christ's death was an exhibition to a sinful world of God's great love. To others He was an "Example" only. Still others see it in the light of the fact that God being holy deemed it necessary to show to the world His hatred for sin, and so His wrath fell on the Christ of Calvary. Modern thought fails to see the necessity of Jesus dying.

Stephen died a martyr and Saul of Tarsus watched him die, but Paul did not preach forgiveness of sins through Stephen's death (Acts 13:38). Light and erroneous views of the atonement come from light and erroneous views of sin. If we regard sin merely as an offence against man, a weakness of the human nature, or a mere disease, we shall not, of course, see the need of the atonement. We must see sin as the Bible depicts it, in its exceeding sinfulness, that which must be punished, and guilt which needs expiation, then and only then, will we understand the reason for the cross of Christ.

G. EFFECTS OF CHRIST'S DEATH ON THE UNIVERSE.

Just as the entire world was affected by the fall of man even so does the death of Christ have an effect on the entire universe (Romans 8:19-23). Jesus Christ is the center of a universe, which revolves around Him and has now been reconciled by His death. *"And having made peace by the blood of his cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him I say; whether they be things in earth or in heaven" (Colossians 1:20).*

The propitiation reaches to the farthest bounds of the universe and as far as sin goes. In other words, the remedy is as great as the need. Through the death of Christ, Satan's power has been neutralized (to be made of none effect). The lifting up of Christ on the cross meant the casting down of Satan. Man need no longer be a slave of sin. Calvary brings to the needy a remission of the past, present, and future sins. Now it is not so much a question of what shall I do with my sins, but rather what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ? *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way nailing it at the cross" (Colossians 2:14).*

Study the following references: John 12:31-32, Romans 3:25-26 and Hebrews 9:26.

LESSON NINE

SELF HELP TEST

A. Define clearly each of the following words:

1. Efficacious: _____

2. Propitiation: _____

B. Give one example of substitutionary death:

1. In the Old Testament: _____

2. In the New Testament: _____

C. Write a paragraph explaining the following statement: "The faith of the atonement presupposes the faith of the incarnation."

D. How do we know that the Old Testament prophets were interested in the atonement?