

## Lesson 20 – The Substitutionary Atonement of Christ

God requires satisfaction because He is holiness, but He makes satisfaction because He is love.

*A.H. Strong.*

I read about a small boy who was consistently late coming home from school. His parents warned him one day that he must be home on time that afternoon, but nevertheless he arrived later than ever. His mother met him at the door and said nothing. At dinner that night, the boy looked at his plate. There was a slice of bread and a glass of water. He looked at his father's full plate and then at his father, but his father remained silent. The boy was crushed.

The father waited for the full impact to sink in, then quietly took the boy's plate and placed it in front of himself. He took his own plate of meat and potatoes, put it in front of the boy, and smiled at his son. When that boy grew to be a man, he said, "All my life I've known what God is like by what my father did that night."

*J. Allan Peterson*

In his book *Written In Blood*, Robert Coleman tells the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

"Would you give your blood to Mary?" the doctor asked. Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble. Then he smiled and said, "Sure, for my sister." Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room--Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned. As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny's smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube. With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence. "Doctor, when do I die?"

Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated, why his lip had trembled when he'd agreed to donate his blood. He thought giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. In that brief moment, he'd made his great decision. Johnny, fortunately, didn't have to die to save his sister. Each of us, however, has a condition more serious than Mary's, and it required Jesus to give not just His blood but His life.

*Thomas Lindberg*

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True Christianity can be distinguished from all the religions of the world (including churches that don't follow the Bible) by the tense of one simple verb. Every other religion is characterized by the word, *do* – in the present tense. If you want to find favor with their god or gods, you have to *do* something. Join a church or temple, make a pilgrimage, offer a sacrifice, partake of a sacrament, live a good life . . . the list goes on and on.

True Christianity, however, recognizes the fact that everything that could ever be needed to bring man to God has already been done. We don't have to do anything to accomplish our salvation. It was done in the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ for our sins on Calvary.

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The Atonement of Christ is the accomplishment of Christ that took place at His death on the Cross, in which He paid the penalty for our sins as our Substitute.

- It is Complete – you cannot add to it.
- It is Eternal – it cannot be repeated.
- It is Perfect – it cannot be improved upon
- It is Essential – there is no salvation without it
- It is Universal – everyone is invited to partake of it
- It is Exclusive – only those who partake of it can know God
- It was Costly – but God reckoned you and I were worth the price
- It is Free – it is the only way we could obtain it

### 1. Definition

- a. Hebrew (Old Testament) – כָּפַר, *kāpar* - to cover, to cancel
- b. Greek (New Testament) – καταλλαγή, *katallagē*, - exchange, reconciliation

### 2. The Divine Plan – The Substitutionary Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ

- a. God loves all people – John 3:16
- b. God wants everyone to be saved – 1 Tim. 2:4
- c. Nobody deserves to be saved – Rom. 3:23; 6:23
- d. God is just – sin must be punished – Rom. 3:26
- e. Jesus came to give His life for us – Matt. 20:28; Heb. 9:28
- f. The Atonement meets all these requirements
  - i. Salvation is offered to all and accepted by few – Matt. 22:14
  - ii. Anyone can be saved – Rev. 22:17
  - iii. Jesus the perfect Son of God did not need to be saved – Heb. 7:27
  - iv. Jesus took the punishment for our sins as our Substitute – Isa. 53:4-6; 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21
- g. The Result of the Atonement – Rom. 8:1-4

### 3. False views of the Atonement of Christ

- a. The Ransom View
  - i. Adam and Eve sold mankind over to the Devil in the Fall. Justice required that God pay the Devil a ransom to free us from the Devil. God, however, tricked the Devil into accepting Christ's death as a ransom, for the Devil did not realize that Christ could not be held in the bonds of death. Once the Devil accepted Christ's death as a ransom, justice was satisfied and God was able to free us from Satan.
  - ii. This view was held by some early theologians, including Origen (185-254 A.D.)
  - iii. Some of the teachers in the Word of Faith movement include the followers of Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, Paul Crouch, etc.
  - iv. This movement – an extreme branch of the Charismatic Movement – is also known as *Name It and Claim It*, *The Prosperity Gospel*, and *Positive Confession*.
- b. The Moral Influence View
  - i. It teaches that Christ's death on the cross served for humankind as an example of God's great love and Christ's obedience.
  - ii. While there is truth in this, it is only a half truth.
- c. Limited Atonement

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- i. It was limited just to the *Elect* – to those who would someday become Christians.
- ii. This theory is part of the larger theory that God did not create everybody to be saved, and that He did not want everybody in Heaven. This view teaches that God somehow wanted the bulk of humanity to go to suffer in Hell forever. Therefore He, in His Sovereignty, elected for some people to be saved, and only those people – the *elect* – could be saved. Jesus died only for the *elect*; He did not die for everybody.
- iii. There is absolutely no Scriptural support for the Limited Atonement theory. A few verses of Scripture are twisted to make it appear Biblical.
- iv. Nobody in the history of the church – with the possible exception of Augustine (354-430 A.D.) – taught this doctrine until the time of the Protestant Reformation.
- v. This theory popularized by John Calvin, some of the other Reformers and their followers.
- vi. Who believes this today
  1. Any church with the name *Reformed* in it, except for the churches that have gone liberal in their theology.
  2. Most Presbyterian churches that are not liberal in their theology.
  3. A small minority of Baptists. There is a group within the Southern Baptist Convention that is trying to take over the Southern Baptists with their views.
  4. R.C. Sproul and Ligonier Ministries
- vii. Some of the followers of Calvin see the error of this view. They reject it and call themselves “4-Point Calvinists.”
- viii. Why we know that Jesus died for everybody – John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2

Some people teach that Jesus did not die for everybody, as the Bible teaches, but that He only died for the people who would eventually become Christians, the *elect*. These people are followers of the teachings of John Calvin, and are sometimes called *Calvinists*. Most of the Reformed churches and Presbyterian churches that are not liberal in their theology believe this teaching. A small percentage of Baptist churches in the U.S. also follow the Calvinist teachings. Limited Atonement, the teaching that Jesus did not die for everybody is part of the philosophical/theological system of John Calvin and the Calvinists.

1. There is nothing in Scripture that suggests that Jesus only died for the elect. The followers of Calvin have to believe this teaching in order to make their other teachings “fit” – even though there is no Biblical basis for believing in a Limited Atonement, as they call it.
2. Scripture is plain that Jesus did die for everyone – 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2

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### And Can It Be

- Charles Wesley

And can it be that I should gain  
an interest in the Savior's blood!  
Died he for me? who caused his pain!  
For me? who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

He left his Father's throne above  
(so free, so infinite his grace!),  
emptied himself of all but love,  
and bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
for O my God, it found out me!  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
for O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
thine eye diffused a quickening ray;  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
my chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in him, is mine;  
alive in him, my living Head,  
and clothed in righteousness divine,  
bold I approach th' eternal throne,  
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.  
Bold I approach th' eternal throne,  
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.