

ARE WE SAVED BY THE **BLOOD?**

WEEK 7

“Substitutionary Atonement”

Overview

Are We Saved by the Blood?

1. The Pattern for Paradise - What was God's **purpose** in creating humans?
2. The Origin of Sin - How did humans get separated from God's *ideal*?
3. The Sacrificial System - What was the point of **blood** sacrifices?
4. The Law and Jesus - What do we mean by God's **Law**?
5. How does the **New** Testament <relate> to the **Old** Testament?
6. Righteous Judgment - Is God's character really perfect and complete?
7. The Substitutionary Atonement – “Jesus *died* in our place” – what does that mean?
8. The Price of Reconciliation - Was “the precious blood of Christ” a **price** that was paid?

Why do people use the word “substitute” when talking about Jesus?

- In an earlier class (Week 3) we looked at the sacrificial system in the Old Testament.
- The concept of “substitution” is part and parcel of the sacrificial system;
- the pure (flawless, without blemish) sacrificial animal died in place of the worshipper;
- the blood of the innocent victim was shed on behalf of the guilty.
- The cross of Christ was the culmination and conclusion of this system;
- John the Baptist summarized Jesus’ mission in the words “Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

By the death of Christ on the cross, the problem of man’s sin was dealt with and the door opened for man to enter into a right relationship with God.

Substitution is **not the only aspect of this**, as we shall see.

But substitution (taking our place) is an essential and major part, which is why the “Statement of Fundamental Truths” of the Assemblies of God singles out “His substitutionary work on the cross” for specific mention.

The death of Christ was to provide salvation and reconciliation by Christ being a substitute for the guilty sinner. This way was God-ordained: thus we read,

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
(2 Corinthians 5:21).

Major Question: Why was Jesus killed?

Surface (or circumstantial) reasons

1. **Blasphemy**
2. **Politics**
3. **Jealousy**

Deeper reasons

1. **Love**
2. **Ransom**
3. **Fulfilment of Scripture**
4. **Victory**
5. **Reconciliation or “atonement”.**
6. **Substitute**

Surface (or circumstantial)

reasons:

A.1) Blasphemy.

According to the Jewish Sanhedrin, Jesus was guilty of blasphemy; for **speaking against the Temple of God** and for **making divine claims about himself** (Mat 26:59-66 and Mark 14:57-64);

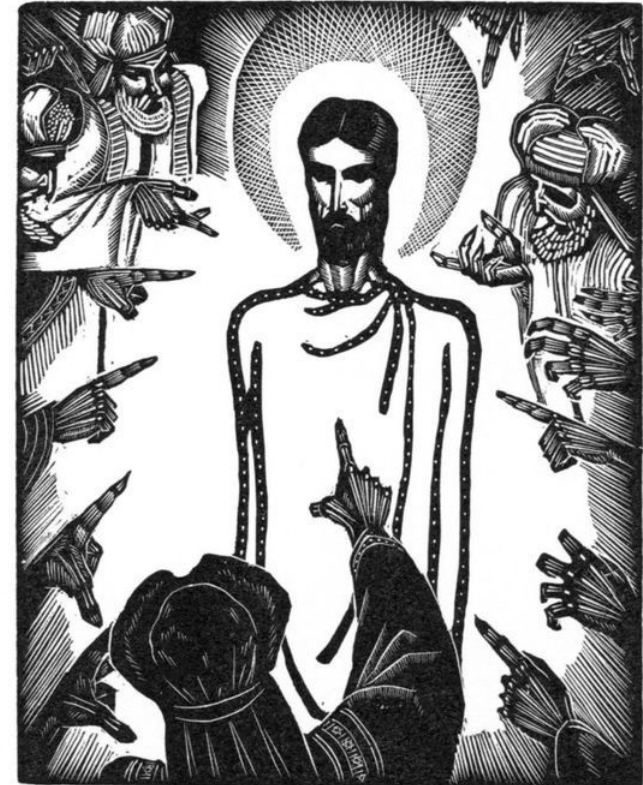
Boldly Jesus combined the wording of two key OT texts

The LORD says to my Lord: ‘Sit at my right hand / until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’

Psalms 110:1

“there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven ... He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshipped him. His kingdom is an everlasting dominion ...”

Daniel 7:13-14



A.2) Politics.



From the Roman legal perspective, they tried to make a political case that Jesus claimed to be a king, which would be treasonable (Luke 23:1-5; John 19:12-16)

But even the Roman Governor of Judaea, Pontius Pilate, did not find this convincing (Luke 23:13-17).

A.3) Jealousy

Pilate saw that the Jewish religious leaders were actually motivated against Jesus by **envy** (Mat 27:18; cf. John 12:19).



Deeper reasons:

B.1) Love.

The easiest reason for us to appreciate is that Jesus died as a showcasing of God’s love (ἀγάπη, *agape*).

“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”

(Romans 5:8).

In Jesus’ own words,

“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends”

(John 15:13).

Deeper reasons:

B.1) Love.

Love is not the only reason or even the primary reason for Jesus' death.

Indeed.. *“If righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!”* (Gal 2:21)

.. the model of sacrificial love would still be there, but as per Apostle Paul, this would be “nothing” in the sense that,

if the death of Christ did not bring us righteousness, it would be **no different** in its effect from the death of any other godly person.

Deeper reasons:

B.2) Ransom.

Jesus himself made a significant purpose statement –

“Even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”

(Mark 10:45, Mat 20:28).

- The word “**ransom**” (λύτρον, *lytron*) suggests the language of the slave market, and a price to be paid for **the freedom of others** (1 Tim 2:5-6).
- So does its related word “**redemption**” (ἀπολύτρωσις, *apolytrosis*) (Rom 3:24, Eph 1:7, Col 1:14).

Deeper reasons:

B.2) Ransom.

The ransom (the price paid by Christ, namely his life blood) is further explained in 1 Peter 1:18-19 *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”*

... But the Bible neither asks, nor answers any question about to whom the ransom was paid; the emphasis here is on the cost.

Deeper reasons:

B.3) Fulfilment of Scripture

After his resurrection, Jesus made another key claim, namely that his death and resurrection had happened to fulfil that which was written in Scripture, i.e. what we call the Old Testament (Luke 24:44-47).

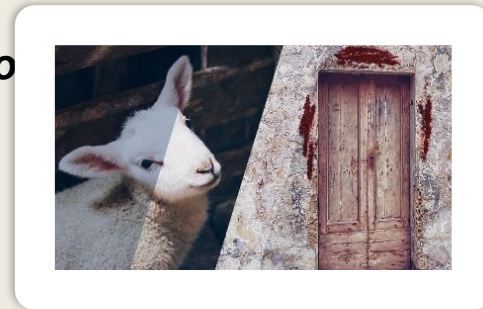
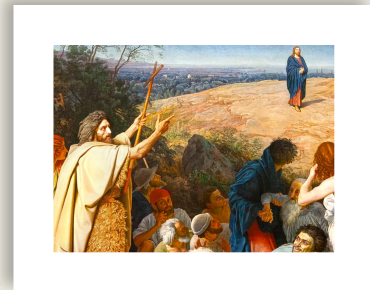
B.3) Fulfilment of Scripture

Deeper reasons:

a) Sacrifice.

A key element of the OT that is fulfilled in the death of Christ is Sacrifice.

- We looked at this in some detail in lesson 3. The New Testament speaks of Christ’s death as a sacrifice (Eph. 5:2, Heb. 7:27, 9:26, 10:10 etc.), thus recalling the OT vocabulary and idea.
- We saw how John the Baptist’s description of Jesus as “the Lamb of God ...” (John 1:29) is based on the OT sacrificial system.
- And we saw how the New Testament presents Jesus as the fulfilment of that entire system, by linking him into key components - *the Passover lamb* (Ex 12:13, Mat 26:1-5, 1 Cor 5:7); and *the inauguration and sealing of the covenant* (Ex 24:8, Mat 26:27-28, 1 Cor 11:25).
- We will see today how the death of Christ also fulfils the **Day of Atonement** (Leviticus 16).



B.3) Fulfilment of Scripture

Deeper reasons:

b) Law.

Dealing with the curse of the law “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”

(Gal :13-14; see Deut 21:23)

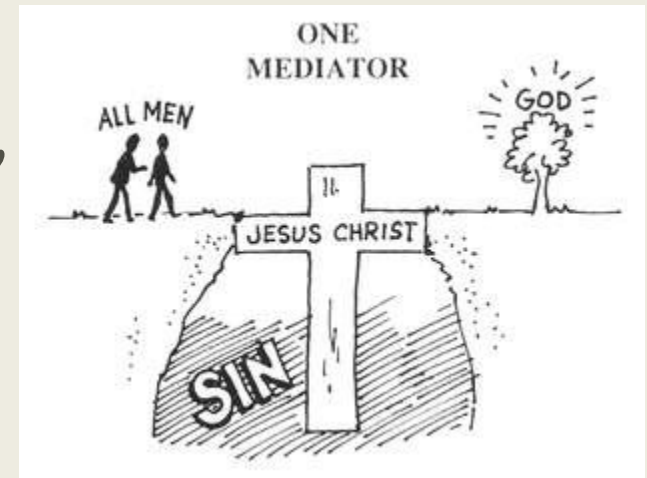


Deeper reasons:

B.4) Mediation.

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people”

(1 Tim 2:5-6).



Jesus died as a mediator and as representative man. He had to become fully human in order to face and overcome temptation, to fulfil the Law and to offer that perfect human life on behalf of others.

Deeper reasons:



B.5) Victory.

- As the Passover approached, Jesus said, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be **glorified**,” (John 12:23). And as he spoke about his death he saw it as a “glorification”.
- Furthermore in John 12:31-33 he said, “Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” here he spoke of his imminent death on the cross as a lifting up, by which the power of Satan (“the prince of this world”) would be defeated.
- This truth is stated again in Colossians 2:13-15, esp. v.15 “And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”
- Therefore Jesus’ **crucifixion was not a defeat but in fact a triumph**, by which he disarmed the demonic spirits of this world, breaking their power and humiliating them.

Deeper reasons:

If we had been present at Jerusalem on that day, we would likely not have recognized this aspect of his death. However there were signs even then that what had taken place had been a victory in the spiritual world.

Mat 27:51-52 says that at the moment of Jesus’ death on the cross,

- a) the curtain of the Temple was torn in two;
- b) the earth shook and the rocks split; and
- c) the tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.

However the great victory that Jesus won on the cross was made publicly visible on the third day by his resurrection.



Deeper reasons:

B.6 Reconciliation or “atonement”.

- “Atonement” is a uniquely English term (“at-one-ment”) for what Christ accomplished on the cross.
- He dealt with the problem of man’s sin and he brought man into a **right relationship** with God. This is the main purpose of his death, and involved the full and complete character of God, just, holy and loving.
- In the Old Testament, the word “atonement” is used by both the KJV and the NIV to translate the Hebrew word כַּפָּרָה *kaphara* (meaning “cover, make atonement, cleanse, forgive, reconcile, make reconciliation”), which occurs 69 times, and also its derivative כִּפּוּרִים *kippurîm* (“atonement”), which occurs 8 times.

Deeper reasons:

Another closely related word כַּפֹּרֶת *kapporeth* is translated as the “mercy seat” in the KJV and as the “atonement cover” in NIV

It was the slab of gold that was laid on top of the ark of the covenant, beneath the wings of the cherubim, inside the Holy of Holies. It was the specific focused location of God’s presence among his people (Ex 25:17-22), and also the specific location where the blood of the atoning sacrifice was offered once a year on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:11-17).

In the Greek OT or “Septuagint” (the version of the OT most commonly used by both Jews and Christians in New Testament times), the mercy seat or atonement cover is rendered as ἱλαστήριον (*hilastērion*).

This is important because this word is taken up in the New Testament and applied to the sacrificial death of Jesus.

Deeper reasons:

- In the New Testament the KJV uses the word “atonement” only once, at Rom 5:11 (“Our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement”) to translate the Greek word καταλλαγή (*katallagē*) - exchange, atonement, reconciliation. (In the NIV this is translated “our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation”).
- However the NIV uses the word “atonement” in the NT in the expression the “**atonement cover**” at Hebrews 9:5 (“the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover”), translating the word ἱλαστήριον (*hilastērion*), as used in the Septuagint.
- This same Greek word (*hilastērion*) is translated “**sacrifice of atonement**” at Rom 3:25 (God presented him [Christ] as a sacrifice of atonement), thus showing **Jesus to be God’s fulfilment of the Day of Atonement sacrifice**.
- The NIV translates the related verb ἱλάσκομαι (*hilaskomai*), as “**make atonement for**” at Heb 2:17 (“and that he [Jesus] might make atonement for the sins of the people.”), and also another related term ἱλασμός (*hilasmos*) as “**atoning sacrifice**” at 1 John 2:2 (“He [Jesus Christ] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world”) and 4:10 (“he [God] loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins

Summary of the use of the word “Atonement” in the New Testament

Greek	Verse	KJV	ESV	NIV
καταλλαγή (katallagē)	Romans 5:11	atonement	reconciliation	reconciliation
“	Romans 11:15	reconciling	reconciliation	reconciliation
“	2 Cor. 5:18 &19	reconciliation (x 2)	reconciliation (x 2)	reconciliation (x 2)
ἱλαστήριον (hilastērion)	Hebrews 9:5	mercy seat	mercy seat	atonement cover
“	Romans 3:25	propitiation	propitiation	sacrifice of atonement
ἱλασμός (hilasmos)	1 John 2:2	propitiation	propitiation	atoning sacrifice
“	1 John 4:10	propitiation	propitiation	atoning sacrifice
ἱλάσκομαι (hilaskomai)	Hebrews 2:17	to make reconciliation	to make propitiation	to make atonement

Nowadays we use the word “The Atonement” as an overall theological term for all that was accomplished by the death of Christ on the cross. In summary it is reconciliation through sacrifice. But as we have seen there are many facets of this deep and rich subject. So although the occurrences of the word “atonement” in the NT are limited, the subject of the Atonement occurs again and again.

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Deeper reasons:

B.7 Substitute.

We finish where we started. The idea of substitution is implied by many of the answers we have given above: he gave his life as a ransom for many; as a sacrifice he took our place; he became a curse for us; he represented us. To these we have to add the passages which speak of Christ’s suffering and death “for” the ungodly (Rom 5:6), “for sinners” (1 Cor 15:3) and “for the unrighteous” (1 Peter 3:18), “for” us (Rom 5:8), and last but not least, “for me” and the believer’s identification with his death “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20).

Question: But what is the connection between Jesus’ dying as a substitute and our life here and now?

One of the clearest statements is 1 Peter 2:24: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness ...” Here we see both substitution and also our transformed life through that substitutionary sacrifice. Christ’s death was not merely an unavoidable prerequisite to providing us a transformed life through resurrection; this transformation was made possible by his substitutionary atoning death on the cross.

A Final Off-the-wall Question: Did God need the sacrifice of Jesus?

Deeper reasons:

In one sense we can argue that God has never “needed” anything. After all, He is perfect and complete in Himself as well as being all-powerful. He did not “need” to create humans at all. But we are glad that He did. He did not “need” to send Christ into the world, but we rejoice that He did).

But God does need to be consistent with himself, with his righteous and holy as well as infinitely loving character. We can see that the substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus is God’s way to deal forever with the problem of sin and bring about reconciliation of man to God, and is consistent with and in fact the climax of His ways from the beginning. In fact Rev 13:8 speaks of “the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.” This remarkable statement shows that God had in His mind the atoning sacrifice of His Son even from the beginning. (see also 1 Peter 1:19-20).

Conclusion

Jesus, who came from God to fulfill the will of his heavenly Father, lived a sinless human life despite all temptations, and allowed himself to be sacrificed as a sinless offering on behalf of the human race, bearing in himself the just punishment for the sins of others and providing the way for humans to have full and free reconciliation to God. So we believe in Christ's substitutionary work on the cross. How filled with awe we should be at the extent of this divine love! And how filled with gratitude that we do not need to bear the fearful penalty for our sins. Let us by faith take hold of this awesome gift, and determine to make our Saviour Jesus Christ the Lord of our lives for however many years we may live.

Next week (which according to our advertised plan would be the final week) we want to consider in more detail the Price of Reconciliation – “the precious blood of Christ” (1 Pet 1:18-

For further understanding...

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=S5kttGA7S0s>

“The Substitutionary Atonement”



Questions ?