

## **|| Who will pay the price for your life? (Substitutionary Atonement)**

Reference Scriptures: Hebrews 10:1-18; Leviticus 16

**|| Hebrews 10:10; 17** “...what God wants for us [is] to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time...I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds” (NLT).

The writer of this passage captures within these brief sentences the central message of the Bible. Jesus Christ paid a price, as our substitute, to secure our eternal existence with God.

**||** We understand this as the doctrine of **substitutionary atonement**. These are the **2 words** that form the very core of the message of the church today.

### **|| Atonement**

e.g. Stop sign infringement – I received a fine – to satisfy the justice system that had issued the fine to me I had to pay a \$180 fine and lose 3 demerit points to atone for my misdemeanour. Once I had written the cheque and sent it off I had atoned for my crime.

I had satisfied the demand for justice and I was now free to keep on driving without any guilt or outstanding warrant against me. The issue was over and the crime I had committed against the law had been atoned

**That’s the idea behind the idea of Atonement. A payment made to satisfy the demands of justice.**

### **Substitute**

We understand this word readily – in primary school when a teacher was away for the day we had a substitute teacher come and take the classes for the day. We have temps that come and fill in office positions when someone is away. If an athlete can’t compete a substitute steps in.

**Basically means to take the place of someone else.**

So when we add these two words together **Substitutionary Atonement** you get the core idea of the whole idea of the message of the Christian faith.

**A payment made by a substitute that satisfies the demands of justice**

The Christian faith stands alone from every other religion in the world when we understand this concept of Substitutionary Atonement.

In every other religion – **wrong doers must self atone**. When they mess up, they pay the price. When they break the law of their faith they alone are required to atone for their misdeeds. The mind blowing concept of the Christian faith is that though we are born into sin God makes provision for someone else to come and make the atoning payment on our behalf. If we request it he pays it. **This is the central theme of the bible.**

Many Christians (believers!) don't fully grasp this. This is a counter intuitive thing in our human society – Substitutionary Atonement (grace).

When people are asked if they are going to heaven they will be heard to say **"I hope so" (fingers crossed)**... if you're in the "hope so crowd" then you haven't grasped the truth about Substitutionary Atonement.

- Growing up in the Catholic Church I went to confession every week. A great thing to do but it reinforced to me that I was not worthy...and never would be...when I came to this church (PENCC) I came out for salvation almost every week for years because I felt that I had been disqualified through my actions of the week. **I was judging my salvation on my goodness or badness.** But when I finally understood Substitutionary Atonement I never needed to go there again because I understood it was a finished work. The penalty was paid for me...once and for all (We read Hebrews 10:10).

**|| A quick walk through the BIBLE** to understand what God had in his mind all the way from the Garden of Eden to Judgement Day.

1. **|| Garden of Eden** (Gen 3) – Adam & Eve can do everything but don't eat from this tree. The day you eat of it you will surely die. Tempted - They eat of it and they feel nakedness, shame, they hide from God. They finally admit what they did and **God kills an animal**. An innocent animal (Gen 3:21). Covers the shame and nakedness of Adam & Eve. **Nothing had died up to this time.**  
**|| An innocent third party lost its life to cover their shame. The first foreshadowing of this concept of Substitutionary Atonement.**

2. **||** (Ex 11& 12) Roll the clock ahead a bit further – in biblical times the Israelites were enslaved by the **Egyptians for 430 years** – God is going to set you free – the ten plagues are coming and when the 10<sup>th</sup> plague comes the Lord says that he is going to send an angel of death to the whole nation of Egypt to bring judgement onto the nation because of the immense wickedness, disobedience, the fact that the whole world is so screwed up. Tomorrow morning the first born sons are going to die **UNLESS** some of you are willing and prepared to go out and kill the prized lamb of your herd and spread the blood of this killed animal over the door posts of your home. Then the angel of death will **pass over** your home and spare judgement on your

firstborn and he will live. **Judgement has passed over.** || **Passover is still celebrated because of that event today.**

3. || (Lev 16) The **sacrificial system** in the Hebrew days of the Old Testament – if you did something wrong – you committed a sin – you must kill an animal and make a **blood sacrifice - something must atone for that sin...**this develops into an incredible event called the || **Day of Atonement.** **Filled with ritual and imagery and ceremony.** Let's take just one of the events of this very special day.
  - a. || The High Priest takes **2 goats**. One **goat is offered as a blood sacrifice – as an atoning sacrifice.**
  - b. || The other goat is called the **Scapegoat**. This is amazing imagery. All of the people of Israel stand before the tent of meeting and the Scapegoat stands before the people and the High Priest lays his hands on the head of the Scapegoat and does a **mass public confession** over all of the people. He declares any act of violence, any act of anger, any unkind word, any act of injustice – all across Israel for this last 12 months I **transfer them from the life of the violator onto the head of this young Scapegoat.**
  - c. A young man then takes this Scapegoat and leads it out into the wilderness and lets it go. The young man then returns to the camp and **declares that the Scapegoat and all of their sins are gone.**
4. || (John 1:29) **John the Baptist** the foreteller of the coming of the Messiah. Jesus at the age of 30 is coming to him to be baptised and as he approaches John, John yells out – **Behold the Lamb of God who will take away the sins of the world.**
  - a. He is basically saying - There is the sacrificial lamb that the entire sacrificial system of the Old Testament has been pointing to, there's the Scapegoat on whose body all of the sins of the world will be placed. Behold the lamb of God who's going to take away the sins of the world. And that shook Jewish culture to the core. And the arguments began – is he really the son of God, is he really the Lamb of God...
5. || (Luke 22:7-20) Jesus at the **last supper** sits around with his followers and he takes a **piece of bread and a cup** and he says that this represents my body and this represents my blood and its going to take both of these, as a Substitutionary Atonement, to permanently erase your sin.
6. || (John 19:28-30) A couple of days later **Jesus is nailed to a cross** – It's no accident what Jesus says at the very end of his life - **Jesus declares that it is finished** – he wasn't saying I give up –
  - a. He was saying that the **idea of Substitutionary Atonement** all the way from that day back in the Garden of Eden traced all the way through

the Old Testament, that I embodied when John saw me when I approached him for baptism, that I spoke about at the Communion table that I'm now doing as I gasp my last breath and spill my last drop of blood – I'm saying its finished – **|| I've paid the Substitutionary Atoning price for the sins of the world.** It is finished – I've done it.

And now it's our turn to decide. Who will pay the price for my life? Because:

7. **||** There is a **final day of reckoning coming** (Rev 20:11-15) – Judgement Day - scripture is very clear about this – there is an end point to human history where every person who has ever lived will stand before a holy God – we all will.
  - a. And there's a great misnomer throughout the world that God will open this great big ledger book and he will find your name and he'll have some calculator in his hand and he'll figure out whether you've been a **bit better or a bit worse** than a set medium norm and then he'll assign **your eternal destination according to a mathematical formula** based on your position on the scale of good and bad.
  - b. A lot of people believe that on the day of reckoning the question they need to cover is **"how bad did you sin?"** That is not going to be the question. Heaven knows how badly you've sinned. **Some of us are spectacular sinner** others of us are very boring sinners...there's no mystery to that.
8. There will be **one question** that you will be asked when you stand before the Holy God on your day of reckoning. Only one question. **|| Who will atone for your sin?** There's got to be an atonement. Someone has to pay the price to satisfy the demands of justice. In a moral society someone has to pay.
9. **There are two options:**
  - a. **||** The first option is that **you can self atone**. Every human being has that choice. You can declare before the Holy God that you will choose to make the payment. **BAD IDEA.**
    - i. If you choose to self atone – then in the afterlife you will be separated from God and be in a place of isolation and you will experience enormous regret for every single day for the length of your eternal life. The Bible paints the picture of **Gnashing of teeth**...some people think of horror and torment – but it **means intense regret.**
  - b. **||** **God has gone to unbelievable lengths to provide a second choice** – he provides a **substitutionary atoner** for us. **He says to you - I spilled the blood of my only son to make it possible for you not to have to live in intense regret for the rest of eternity. I gave up everything to**

**make sure you would not have to live in eternal regret. I gave Jesus Christ.**

10. Jesus Christ claims to have given his life as a Substitutionary Atonement. He declares it for the payment of your life.

**11. Who's going to atone for your sin? Who will pay the price for your life?**

If you're unclear about your answer...get it clear today.

Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved – call on him today.