

## Genesis, part 8 – Substitutionary Atonement – Genesis 3:21-24)

Today, we want to talk about the two “cardinal principles” that make God’s plan of salvation work.

“Therefore, as by one man sin entered the world [Adam], and death through sin [Genesis 3], so death passed onto all men (and women) . . .” Romans 5:12

Physical death

Spiritual death

“Then, the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.” Genesis 3:21

God made coverings for Adam and Eve – symbolic of the fact that He had “covered” their sin and that they were back in good standing with God.

“Then Adam and Eve realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.” Genesis 3:7

Nobody can cover their sin by their own human effort – “For by human effort, no one shall ever be declared right in God’s sight.” Ephesians 3:20 – only God can do this for us!

God created this covering for Adam and Eve’s sin based on the shedding of the blood and death of two innocent animals (“substitutes”).

God intended this process in Genesis 3 to be “prophetic.”

- Innocent substitutes = Lord Jesus Christ
- Price they paid = price it would cost Jesus to reconcile us to God
- Blood covering they provided = Lord Jesus’ blood covering for sinners
- God accepting the death of an innocent substitute = how God would offer salvation through the death of Jesus on the cross as our substitute

John MacArthur

“The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. They didn’t participate in it. God did it all, acting in pure grace toward them as sinners.”

“This is a magnificent picture of salvation . . . Nobody can make an adequate covering of his sin by himself. Only God can make a covering for us that is acceptable in His sight.”

“Then the LORD God said, ‘The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever.’”

Genesis 3:22

God wanted Adam and Eve to live forever – just not in their current spiritual condition!

Our sin nature will not be eradicated from our bodies until the Lord Jesus returns and gives us **new** bodies.

Had Adam and Eve eaten of the Tree of Life here in Genesis 3 – they would have been cursed to live forever in defective bodies with a “sin nature.”

“Blessed are those who have washed their robes white in the blood of the Lamb . . . because they have the right to (eat of) the Tree of Life.” Revelation 7:14, 22:14

God is going to let every believer in Jesus eat from the Tree of Life – but only after Jesus has given us our new bodies!

“God banished them from the Garden of Eden, to work the ground from which Adam had been taken.” Genesis 3:23

*“After He drove the man out, on the east side of the Garden, God stationed the cherubim, along with a flaming sword that turned in every direction, to guard the way to the Tree of Life.” Genesis 3:24*

So What?

*Here in Genesis 3, we find the principles behind God’s plan of salvation laid out for us for the very first time in the Bible.*

*Later, God codified these principles in the sacrificial system of the Old Testament and illustrated them in the operation of the Tabernacle (later the Temple in Jerusalem).*

*When it comes to God’s plan of salvation – the Tabernacle was God’s version of “How It Works.”*

*“For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given you the blood to make atonement for your sin on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement.” Leviticus 17:11*

*“For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.” Hebrews 9:22*

*“And into the Holy of Holies went the High Priest alone, once every year, but never without blood, which he offered for his sins and the sins of all the people.” Hebrews 9:7*

### **Cardinal Principle #1 – Substitutionary atonement**

*God granted “atonement” to Adam and Eve based on the death of an innocent “substitute.”*

*“Innocent” = Hebrews 4:15: “Jesus was tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sin.”*

*“Substitute” = Isaiah 53:5, 6: “He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our sins; the punishment that brought peace to us was laid upon Him. All of us like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way. But the LORD laid on Him the sin of us all.”*

*“Atonement” – Ephesians 1:7: “In Him, we have redemption, the atonement for our sins, through His blood.”*

*“For Christ died for our sins once for all, **the just for the unjust**, in order that He might **reconcile us** to God.” 1 Peter 3:18*

### **Cardinal Principle #2 – The all sufficiency of Jesus’ work on the cross**

*The operation of the Tabernacle was also intended to teach us that animal sacrifices were insufficient to **fully** deal with sin.*

*This is why the priests had to keep offering the same sacrifices for sin over and over – day after day.*

*Reason = because these animal sacrifices never dealt with sin **permanently**.*

*“These sacrifices, repeated endlessly year after year, could never make perfect those who were offering them.” Hebrews 10:1b*

*“For if they could have, people would have stopped offering them because they would have been cleansed from sin once and for all.” Hebrews 10:2*

*Once your sins have been **permanently** forgiven – there is no need to keep offering sacrifices for sin.*

*But – at the Tabernacle, the Israelites **did** have to keep offering sacrifices for sin day after day.*

*“It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to permanently take away sins.” Hebrews 10:4*

*The final solution for mankind’s sin had to be purchased – not by some **physical** lamb – but by “The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29).*

By His death on the cross, Jesus did for us what generations of Jewish priests and millions of Jewish sacrifices were never able to do: namely, atone for our sin permanently and forever!

“Not by the blood of bulls and goats, but by His own blood, Jesus entered the Holy of Holies once for all and obtained **eternal** (permanent) redemption for us.” Hebrews 9:12

“For by one sacrifice [Himself on the cross], He [Jesus] has **perfected forever** those who believe in Him.” Hebrews 10:14

“Now – where there is forgiveness like this **no further sacrifices for sin are needed!**” Hebrews 10:18

Thanks to the flawless “substitutionary atonement” that Jesus provided on the cross – I’m **perfected forever** in God’s sight – because the work of Jesus on the cross is **ALL-sufficient!**

**Born physically:** August 1948

**Perfected forever by Jesus’ blood:** March 1971

Perfected forever by the blood of Jesus **plus nothing!**

“I need no other argument – I need no other plea.  
It is **enough** that Jesus died and that He died for me.”

From the beginning of mankind to today – God’s offer of salvation to sinners has always been the same: “substitutionary atonement.”

- Now, the “innocent substitute” is not some bull or goat – but the sinless Son of God Himself!
- And the “atonement” is not just temporary – but permanent!

### **Isaac Watts**

Not all the blood of beasts, on Jewish altars slain,  
Could give my guilty conscience peace, or wash away the stain.

But Christ the heavenly Lamb takes all our sin away,  
A sacrifice of nobler name, and richer blood than they.

“When you stand before God at the end of your life, what will God find written next to your name?”

#1 – “Perfected forever by the blood of Jesus”

#2 – “Payment due by account holder”

“How many worlds would every lost soul in hell give for just one chance to go back and cleave to the blood of Jesus.” Robert Murray McCheyne