

Atonement and the Cross of Christ Lesson 9 4Q 2008

Metaphors of Salvation

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

What does it mean sacrifice of atonement to demonstrate God's justice? How have you heard this explained in the past? Do you have a different explanation?

The Greek word translated "sacrifice of atonement" is hilasterion and is the word used for the lid to the ark of the covenant. Does this give us further insight into the text? God presented Christ as the lid to the ark to demonstrate His justice, what would this mean?

Ephesians 1:9,10 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

What is being described in the text above? God is bringing the universe back into unity with Himself, the lid to the ark of the covenant is the symbolic glue that holds the universe together. Notice the symbolism:

- According to our Romans text Jesus is the lid
- The shikinah represents the Father
- The angels on the lid represent the unfallen beings
- And the box under the lid represents saved humanity
 - The box was constructed out of acacia wood which was full of holes but covered in gold – just like us full of sin but purified by Christ to be golden in character
 - Inside the ark was the 10 commandments, manna and the Aaron's rod that budded
 - Jesus is the true bread of heaven which is to be eaten, or taken into the believer
 - In the new covenant the law is written on the heart
 - When we have partaken of Jesus, been won to trust so we open the heart for the Holy Spirit to write the law on our minds, then we are transformed from dead sticks to living beings bringing forth fruit of righteousness

Notice then Jesus is the medium through which God unites, at-ones His universe again in love!

So how does this idea relate to justice? What is God's justice? Justice means doing what is just, or right and what is the basis of all God's actions? Love, so God's justice is a manifestation of love. So, God sent Jesus to reconcile the universe back into unity with Himself as a revelation of His character of love! The KJV makes this more clear by translating it as righteousness!

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

First what is the meaning of redeem? One of multiple meanings is “deliverance from debt or slavery” other meanings include:

- To free from the consequences of sin
- To extricate or overcome something detrimental

Does it change how you understand redemption if you understand the meaning as free from consequences or overcoming rather than deliverance from debt?

What about the idea we are prisoners of sin and the law is the gatekeeper?

Here is my paraphrase of Galatians 3:21-26:

Gal 3:21 Is the written law, then, somehow in opposition to the promises of God? Of course not! The written law was simply a tool to diagnose our sickness and lead us to God for healing. If the written law could somehow cure the infection of selfishness and promote life, then healing would certainly have followed the giving of the law. 22 But Scripture is clear, all humanity is infected with selfishness and is dying, and the only cure is the one promised – Jesus Christ who through his death revealed the truth about God, which restores love and trust, and simultaneously purged the infection of selfishness.

Gal 3:23 Before Christ came we were quarantined by the written law, restrained from continual self-destruction until Christ revealed the only true cure. 24 So then, the written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ – the Great Physician so that we might be set right with God by trust. 25 Now that trust in God has been restored and we are set right in heart, mind, character and again practice God's methods, we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God.

Gal 3:26 You are all sons of God, revealing his character, through trust established by Jesus Christ, 27 for all of you who have immersed your minds and hearts into the truth of God as revealed by Christ have had your characters changed, like a new set

of clothing, replaced with the character of Christ. 28 Your station on earth is irrelevant; it doesn't matter whether you are Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one in character, method, principle and motive through all that Christ has done. 29 If you are Christlike in heart and mind, then you are one of Abraham's descendents and an heir to all the promises of God.

The lesson states the "debt" could be paid only by relinquishing their own life – thoughts? Why? The only way any human, other than Christ, could exterminate the infection of sin in themselves was by dying. Without Christ as long as we live we live selfishly, sinfully. But Christ came and lived unselfishly, sinlessly and in so doing Christ was able to destroy the infection of fear and selfishness without the need to die eternally.

Sin in a human, unremedied, results in the destruction of the mind, the searing of conscience, the solidification of a Satanic character and the only result is death. Sin unremedied in a human therefore becomes so incorporated into the identity that the only way to eliminate it is to die eternally. The only way to eliminate selfishness in such a being is to eliminate the solidified selfish character.

But Jesus came and developed a perfect sinless character in His human nature (His Divine nature was of course always perfect) overcoming the temptations to act in self interest (Heb 5:8, 9). Thus when Christ died He did not destroy Himself. He did not destroy His identity. He did not destroy His character but He destroyed death and the devil (2Tim 1:9,10, Heb 2:14). Christ therefore rose again in a humanity perfectly healed by His selfless life and death!

Read second paragraph – thoughts? The lesson says the curse of the law is the "claim" it made against us – can a law make a claim? If you jump off a bridge does the law of gravity "file a claim"? No, but does the law of gravity have "jurisdiction" or "authority" or "power" over you? Yes! Is it imposed or natural? If someone jumped off a bridge and died when they hit the bottom would we say, "the law of gravity gave the legal basis for the death of the jumper"? Does this help us understand the law of God?

What law is the law in Galatians? Both the 10 commandments and the law of love because the 10 commandments are a distillation of the law of love, but ultimately the law of love. What is the curse of the law?

Read third paragraph "Christ also gave..." thoughts? Who did Christ pay the debt to and from whom did Christ buy our forgiveness? Does this mean God was unforgiving without Christ's death? Was God unwilling to forgive without Christ's death? Did God forgive before or after Christ died?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? How might we say this more accurately?

- Because God loved His children so much He couldn't ignore their pain, suffering and terminal condition. His heart of love compelled Him to intercede to heal and save His children. He fulfilled in Himself what the law requires in order for life to exist by restoring His law of love perfectly into humanity and destroying the infection of selfishness.

MONDAY

Reconciliation – thoughts?

Read fourth paragraph “Third, the object...” thoughts?

The lesson states, “The verb is in the past tense indicating that the action it expresses is complete.” How do we understand this? Are any of us fully, completely reconciled to God? Then what does it mean?

The human species was fully and completely reconciled to God in the person of Jesus Christ. He was fully human and He fully restored, fixed, reconciled the species in His own person to God. Because of Jesus there will always be a sinless, perfect, never defiled human being. Because of Jesus the species known as human was saved, will not become extinct! The only question that remains is how many other specimens will join Him?

Read last paragraph “Fourth, reconciliation...” thoughts? Why were we objects of wrath? What is wrath? Wrath is God giving us up and letting us go to reap what we have freely chosen (Romans 1:18,24,26,28). Thus we were objects of wrath because our natures were inherently selfish. Another way to say it: we were terminal.

TUESDAY

First sentence – “Justification is....” Thoughts? Justification is not a word in the Bible – justification is a Latin word from the Greek. In our culture Latin is the language of our legal system and thus when the Greek is translated into Latin terms we “hear” legal connotations which were not in the original. Then, having been raised in a culture where our minds are indoctrinated into a forensic salvation many translators read this back into the text when they translate.

The word translated justice is the Greek *dikaion* and actually means righteousness. We could say “rightify” or to make right rather than justify.

Justification simply means to set right what is not right, to fix what is broken or wrong, to put in harmony what is out of harmony. This is what Jesus did!

Read second paragraph “A few points...” See all the stuff that is read into the Bible that is not in the Bible, where does the Bible say we are charged with a crime?

We are not charged with a crime we are diagnosed as terminal, as being out of harmony with the law that life is based upon! If an HIV infected man and woman have a child that is born HIV infected is the baby born “guilty”? No! The baby is born terminal.

This problem of understanding justification comes from a more fundamental misunderstanding of the law of God. Those who see justification as a legal process see the law of God as an imposed law requiring imposed penalties and legal maneuvers to fix. But God’s law is a natural law, a principle upon which life is designed. Breaking this law results in a terminal condition which if unremedied results in death. Thus justification is putting us back in harmony with the law of love!

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph – thoughts? What did God do to His Son at the Cross?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What does it mean that our redemption would not have been possible without the sacrificial blood?

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Does this mean we should be careful not to interpret the various metaphors in such a way to represent the Father to be in anyway different from Christ?

FRIDAY

Question 2 read – thoughts? Does a parent have to be appeased in order to be reconciled to a wayward child or does the child have to be changed?

Question 4 read – thoughts? Why could God’s wrath against sin not be turned off? Because His wrath is ultimately His love which gives intelligent beings true and real freedom and those who insist on rebelling against Him and refuse reconciliation He ultimately lets go. Therefore God could never turn off His love!