

Atonement

Study

Book

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## Introduction

I shall begin by giving Mr. Webster's definition of the word "atonement": "1. Agreement; concord; reconciliation, after enmity or controversy. 2. Expiation; satisfaction or reparation made by giving an equivalent for an injury, or by doing or suffering that which is received in satisfaction for an offense or injury; with for." Next I will present a longer definition from Easton's Bible Dictionary: "Atonement This word does not occur in the Authorized Version of the New Testament except in Rom. 5:11, where in the Revised Version the word "reconciliation" is used. In the Old Testament it is of frequent occurrence.

The meaning of the word is simply at-one-ment, i.e., the state of being at one or being reconciled, so that atonement is reconciliation. Thus it is used to denote the effect which flows from the death of Christ.

But the word is also used to denote that by which this reconciliation is brought about, viz., the death of Christ itself; and when so used it means satisfaction, and in this sense to make an atonement for one is to make satisfaction for his offenses (Ex. 32:30; Lev. 4:26; 5:16; Num. 6:11), and, as regards the person, to reconcile, to propitiate God in his behalf."

I guess I will never forget about thirty years ago I was teaching a Bible class and asked the question, "what does the word "atonement" mean?" One of the good sisters answered "At-one-ment". I have no way of knowing if she had ever seen or read Easton's definition but she was absolutely correct. Our sins separate us from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) "*Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: <sup>2</sup>But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*" Since we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*" There needed to be a way that we could be at-one-ment with God. When Paul wrote "for all have sinned he included everyone [even the first man and woman of God's creation and everyone since. My friends this includes you and me so you see we too are in need of "atonement".

Actually there are two different atonements referred to in the Bible; one was under the Old Covenant and the other is found in New Covenant. We shall discuss both in this book.

## Introduction questions

1. Define atonement.

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2. What are the results of sin? [Isa. 59:1, 2].

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3. Who is guilty of sinning? [Rom. 3:23].

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4. What does it mean “to come short of the glory of God?”

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5. If you have reached the age of accountability are you in need of atonement?

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6. How many different “atonements” can be found in the Bible?

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## Notes

## Atonement Under the Law

By making only a casual reading of the Old Testament will reveal that the children of Israel were sinful people and were in need of “atonement” because they had separated themselves from God. We must understand that we separate ourselves from God; He does not separate himself from us. Since they had separated themselves from God there needed to be a means or method that would be approved by God or to bring them back into fellowship with God. This method was not of man’s devising; it was accomplished by God giving the means and the rules of “atonement”. This is what we will discuss at this time.

God’s plan for atonement under the Law was that since it was mankind that had sinned man should make a sacrifice for his sin: (*Leviticus 1:1-5*) “*And the LORD called unto Moses, and spake unto him out of the tabernacle of the congregation, saying, <sup>2</sup>Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man of you bring an offering unto the LORD, ye shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd, and of the flock. <sup>3</sup>If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the LORD. <sup>4</sup>And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. <sup>5</sup>And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD: and the priests, Aaron’s sons, shall bring the blood, and sprinkle the blood round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.*” Upon the completion of the tabernacle God set forth laws that the priests must follow. Therefore, we can rightfully refer to the book of Leviticus as the book of Law. The book of Law begins by instructing that a sacrifice be made.

Although man was required to supply the sacrifice he was not permitted to make the sacrifice himself; that was the duty of the priests: (*1 Chronicles 6:49*) “*But Aaron and his sons offered upon the altar of the burnt offering, and on the altar of incense, and were appointed for all the work of the place most holy, and to make an atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.*” (*2 Chronicles 29:24*) “*And the priests killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel: for the king commanded that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel.*” The priests [Aaron’s sons] were to sprinkle the blood [1 Chronicles 6:49]. The work that was to be done in the most holy place was to be done by the high priests only. Each had their work and they needed one another. Concerning the work of the priests we are told: 1. they were to make atonement

for Israel. They also meditated between the people and God; in no way were they to magnify or enrich themselves as their duty was to serve the people. 2. We are also told that they presided in God's house and they were bidden to do all that God commanded. Even the high priest was subject to the laws of God.

All priests were Levites but not all Levites were priests. The duty of the priests [those who were of the tribe of Levi] was to kill the sacrifices [2 Chronicles 29:24]. As you might be imagine this was a bloody and unpleasant task. It is stated that these offerings were made "for all Israel". Since the ten tribes had overcome the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and they were all guilty of idolatry these sacrifices must be made for "all Israel". Burnt offerings along with the one sin offering were made. This sin offering was typical of the reconciliation and atonement made for the whole spiritual Israel of God by the sacrifice of Christ. Christ is a propitiation not for the sins of Israel only but of the whole world: (*1 John 2:1-2*) "*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: <sup>2</sup>And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*" From this we understand that Christ died for those under the Old Covenant as well as for the sins of you and me!

Of course these sacrifices were needful for atonement because the people had sinned: (*Exodus 32:30*) "*And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.*" The sin that they had just committed was making the golden calf and when Moses saw it and saw that the people were naked he was angered. If this angered Moses don't you think that God was also angered? Moses went to God and interceded for the people. Jesus Christ intercedes for us to God when we sin. Of course God viewed this making of a golden calf as idolatry. Since God is a righteous God this sin could not be overlooked; therefore, it was necessary for atonement be made. Moses informed the people that he would go up to Mount Sinai to make atonement for their Sin to God. It should be pointed out that Moses did not offer a sacrifice for their sin; rather he prayed to God that He would forgive their sin and that Jehovah would not punish any more for this sin. By his first prayer Moses had obtained that the Lord would not consume them from off of the face of the earth; although 3,000 men had been cut off, mainly from one tribe. Moses' petition was that God not cut off all tribes of the nation from off the face of the earth.

God told Moses that only those who had sinned against Him would be blotted out: (*Exodus 32:33*) "*And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned*

*against me, him will I blot out of my book.*” No doubt some of these sinners thought that their names were written in the book of life but their names were blotted out. This goes to show that the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” is a false doctrine. Furthermore, verse 33 also shows the power of prayer. It is clear that Moses’ prayer to God was effective to save some of the people because of God’s next statement to Moses was: (*Exodus 32:34*) “*Therefore now go, lead the people unto the place of which I have spoken unto thee: behold, mine Angel shall go before thee: nevertheless in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.*” Why tell Moses to go “lead the people” if everyone was blotted out?

I will now give a list of some of the people and some of the sins that atonement was made for:

- For the whole congregation: (*Numbers 15:25*) “*And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance.*”
- For the priests: (*Leviticus 8:34*) “*As he hath done this day, so the LORD hath commanded to do, to make an atonement for you.*” [The priests are in this context].
- Persons sinning ignorantly [*Lev. 4:20-35*].
- Persons sinning wilfully: (*Leviticus 6:7*) “*And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD: and it shall be forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein.*”
- Persons swearing rashly: (*Leviticus 5:4*) “*Or if a soul swear, pronouncing with his lips to do evil, or to do good, whatsoever it be that a man shall pronounce with an oath, and it be hid from him; when he knoweth of it, then he shall be guilty in one of these.*”
- Persons withholding evidence: (*Leviticus 5:1*) “*And if a soul sin, and hear the voice of swearing, and is a witness, whether he hath seen or known of it; if he do not utter it, then he shall bear his iniquity.*”
- Persons unclean: (*Leviticus 5:2*) “*Or if a soul touch any unclean thing, whether it be a carcase of an unclean beast, or a carcase of unclean cattle, or the carcase of unclean creeping things, and if it be hidden from him; he also shall be unclean, and guilty.*”

- Women after childbirth: (*Leviticus 12:6-8*) “*And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest: <sup>7</sup>Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female. <sup>8</sup>And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.*”
- The altar: (*Exodus 29:36*) “*And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it.*”
- The holy place: (*Leviticus 16:16*) “*And he shall make an atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.*”
- The healed leper: (*Leviticus 14:18*) “*And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest’s hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD.*”
- The leprous house: (*Leviticus 14:53*) “*But he shall let go the living bird out of the city into the open fields, and make an atonement for the house: and it shall be clean.*”

From this list you can clearly see that the atonement [sacrifice] for sin was quite extensive. I hope that I have also shown from the word of God that the atonement under the law was effective as to its intended purpose [I.e. it provided the forgiveness of sin that the sinner had committed]. We will now turn to the atonement under the New Law or the New Covenant as found in the New Testament.

## Questions for atonement under the Law

1. Why were those under the Law in need of atonement?

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2. Whose fault is it if we find ourselves separated from God?

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3. Who devised a plan of atonement?

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4. What was man required to do in order to receive “atonement”?

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5. What is contained in the book of Leviticus?

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6. What is the first requirement that man is instructed to do in the book of Leviticus? [Lev. 1:2, 3].

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7. Who supplied the sacrifice?

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8. Who actually made the sacrifice? [1 Chron. 6:49; 2 Chron. 29:24].

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9. Were all Levites priests?

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10. What priests was allowed into the most holy place?

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11. Who were the sacrifices made for? [2 Chron. 29:24].

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12. What were their sin offerings typical of?

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13. Who was Christ a propitiation for? [2 Jn. 2:1, 2].

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14. When the people in the absence of Moses made a golden calf who interceded for them? [Ex. 32:30].

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15. Do we have an intercessor when we sin; who is our intercessor?

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16. Under the law why was atonement necessary? [Ex. 32:30].

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17. Where did Moses go to make atonement for this sin? [Ex. 32:30].

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18. Did Moses make a sacrifice or did he pray to God as atonement for their sin.

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19. Prove that Moses' prayer of atonement to God was effective. [Ex. 32:33, 34].

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20. Was atonement ever made for all the congregation? If so who made it? [Num. 15:25].

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21. Was there one atonement under the Law or were there different sacrifices for different sins?

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**Notes**

## What is Atonement As Found In the New Testament

As many may think that this statement is incorrect it is exactly what the Bible states; God commended His love to us while we were yet sinners. This is a demonstration of God's perfect love for His creation. Below you will find proof of my statement: (*Romans 5:8-11*) "*But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. <sup>9</sup>Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. <sup>10</sup>For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. <sup>11</sup>And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.*" Perhaps some are wondering how this demonstration of God's love benefits them; the answer is found in verse eleven. This verse clearly states that through Jesus Christ we who are sinners receive atonement. In other words through Christ's sacrifice it was made possible for you and me as sinners to be reconciled unto Jehovah God and to be at one with God. What a blessing we have because of God's love and Christ giving his life that we might have eternal life. You and I are polluted in sin or to put it another way we are dead in sin: (*Ephesians 2:5*) "*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*" The father of the lost son [or the prodigal] knew that his son was dead in sin: (*Luke 15:32*) "*It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.*" How did this father know that his son was dead in sin? Answer, the lost son told him that he had "sinned against heaven, and in thy sight": (*Luke 15:21*) "*And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*" By preferring earthly things to heavenly he had sinned against heaven, thereby God in heaven was a witness to his sins and all of the earthly beings who saw his were also witnesses to his sin. It was at this point that the lost son had a deep sense of his sin and by going to his father and confessing his sin he truly repented of his sin. Through his repentance and confessing his sin to his father he received forgiveness or what can be called atonement of his sins from his father.

Since sin separates us from God [*Isaiah 59:1, 2*] God had a plan by which we could be reconciled to Himself: (*2 Corinthians 5:18-19*) "*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*" The work of reconciliation or making atonement is here ascribed to the Father even though it was properly the work of Jesus. I think

it is proper to say that God reconciled us to Himself because even though it was Christ who shed his blood it was a sacrifice on God's behalf as well: (*John 3:16*) "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" Christ gave his life and God gave His Son; it was a joint effort! We can also see that God took the first step by setting up the plan for man's reconciliation or atonement. This had been promised by God in prophecy and was fulfilled by Christ. The word "us" in 2 Corinthians 5:18 no doubt refers to those who are Christians. This is the way that Strong defines the word "reconciliation": From G2644; *exchange* (figuratively *adjustment*), that is, *restoration* to (the divine) favor: - atonement, reconciliation (-ing).

The apostle John used another word for atonement: (*1 John 2:2*) "*And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*" Strong's Greek and Hebrew Dictionaries explain that the word "propitiation" literally means atonement. Jesus became the sacrifice, reconciliation, the propitiation or the atonement for the sins of the whole world. By the statement "but also for the sins of the whole world" John does not mean that everyone will be saved because of Jesus' sacrifice; "the whole world is referring to both the Jews and the Gentiles. It should be remembered that John himself was a Jew and so were those he wrote to. He wanted them to understand that Christ made atonement for both the Jews and Gentiles. The word translated "propitiation" only occurs in one other passage of the New Testament: (*1 John 4:10*) "*Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*" It has the same essential meaning here as it has in chapter two verse two. Although a different Greek word has been rendered "propitiation" and may be found in *Romans 3:25* "*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*"; don't you find it interesting that Paul states that it is through faith [in Jesus' blood] that propitiation is achieved? We need to have the attitude of publican who pleaded for God's mercy to receive atonement: (*Luke 18:13*) "*And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.*"

**Questions: atonement as found in the New Testament**

1. Did God commend his love for those who were sinless? [Rom. 5:8].

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2. What resulted from this act of God's love? [Rom. 5:11].

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3. What was Jesus Christ's part in this atonement? [Rom. 5:8].

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4. Before receiving atonement for our sins are we dead in sin? [Eph. 2:5].

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5. Can you think of a father who was aware that his son was dead in sin? [Luke 15:17-22].

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6. Since the lost son had gone into a far country how did the father know that his son had sinned? [Luke 15:21].

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7. Did the lost son receive atonement for his sins?

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8. What is another word for atonement? [2 Cor. 5:18, 19].

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9. To whom does the word "us" in 2 Corinthians 5:18 refer to?

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10. What word did the apostle John use for atonement? [1 John 2:2].

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11. What did John mean by “the whole world”?

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12. Was John a Jew or a Gentile?

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13. Is faith in the blood of Jesus required to receive propitiation?

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14. To receive atonement what attitude should we have? [Luke 18:13].

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### **Notes**

## Atonement foreordained and foretold

Atonement was not a spur of the moment idea; God had planned it long before; there is no doubt that atonement was planned by God: (*Romans 3:25*) “*Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;*” Christ is our propitiation to God for sin and this must be understood of Christ making satisfaction to God’s justice for the sins of His people. This propitiation or atonement could only be accomplished through Christ and it was necessary that he shed his blood to accomplish this: (*Hebrews 10:4*) “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*” Since nothing but Christ’s shed blood could satisfy God He therefore foreordained that Christ must make atonement for our sins. May we always remember that it was God’s love for His people that motivated this!

When did God decide to foreordain that Jesus was to make atonement for our sins? (*1 Peter 1:18-20*) “*Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; <sup>19</sup>But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: <sup>20</sup>Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,*” It was foreknown by God before He created the world what Christ was to do and what he must suffer. God’s plan of redemption is not a new thing; His plan was drawn in eternity; furthermore, those to be redeemed were also planned before the foundation of the world. To demonstrate the wisdom of God permit me to say that a Savior was provided for sinners before sin had ever been committed. This friend is foreknowledge and love; there is no other way to explain this action of God.

Isaiah foretold of Jesus’ suffering when he would make atonement for our sins: (*Isaiah 53:4-9*) “*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. <sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. <sup>8</sup>He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he*

stricken. <sup>9</sup>And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” The word “surely” [verse 4] informs us that this actually happened. The Jews who stood by and shouted, “Crucify him” thought that he stood convicted of some great sin when in reality Jesus was fulfilling a prophecy that Isaiah had long ago foretold and one of which they should have been well aware of. Isaiah was simply informing that Christ’s sufferings was foreordained and that it would indeed come to pass.

Zechariah also told his people what God had foreordained: (*Zechariah 13:1*) “In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness.” Gill says this about this scripture: “Zechariah often repeats, “in that day” Zec.12:3-4, Zec. 12:6, Zec. 12:8-9, Zec. 12:11; Zec. 13:1-2, Zec. 13:4; Zec. 14:6, Zec. 14:8, Zec. 14:13, Zec. 14:20, resuming his subject again and again, as a time not proximate, but fixed and known of God”. Therefore Zechariah is declaring to them that which God had foreordained. Jesus said that Abraham desired to see the day that Zechariah wrote about: (*John 8:56*) “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.” If Abraham longed to see this day is definite proof that this day had long been foreordained before it came to pass. It was a day that many kings, prophets and righteous men longed to see: (*Matthew 13:17*) “For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.”(*Luke 10:24*) “For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.” I might add that all who were aware of what God had foreordained waited patiently for the day when salvation would come through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The gospel of John chapter eleven contains the remarkable prophecy of Caiaphas, and the consequent proceedings of the Jews, John 11:49-53: (*John 11:47-51*) “Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. <sup>48</sup>If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation. <sup>49</sup>And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, <sup>50</sup>Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. <sup>51</sup>And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation;” Caiaphas was the high priest

that year [verse 49]. Gill tells us this: By the law of Moses, Exo 40:15, the office of high priest was for life, and the son of Aaron's race always succeeded his father. But at this time the high priesthood was almost annual: the Romans and Herod put down and raised up whom they pleased, and when they pleased, without attending to any other rule than merely that the person put in this office should be of the sacerdotal race. According to Josephus, Ant. xviii. c. 3, the proper name of this person was Joseph, and Caiaphas was his surname. He possessed the high priesthood for eight or nine years, and was deposed by Vitellius, governor of Judea. Some commentators state that as wicked and worthless as Caiaphas was that God put these words on the tongue of Caiaphas. I do not know whether this is correct or not; but the one thing I do know is that Jesus did surely die as an atonement for all people. I am sure that the words of verses fifty and fifty one are the words of the evangelist John and what he wrote is how he interpreted the words of Caiaphas.

## **Atonement foreordained and foretold questions**

1. What cannot take away our sins? [Heb. 10:4].

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2. Is this why God foreordained that Christ must be the one to make atonement for our sins?

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3. What motivated this; was it God's love for His people? [Jn. 3:16].

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4. When did God decide that Jesus would be the one to make atonement for our sins? [1 Pet. 1:20].

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5. When was man's redemption planned by God?

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6. How would you explain God's planning and providing us with a Savior before mankind had ever sinned?

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7. What did Isaiah say that Jesus would do? [Isa. 53:4].

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8. Did this prophecy concerning Jesus actually come to pass; if so when?

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9. When Jesus performed that which Isaiah had foretold did the Jews recognize what was happening?

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10. Wasn't Isaiah actually telling them what God had foreordained?

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11. Zechariah also told the people of his day what God had foreordained; with what word did he start his statement? [Zechariah 13:1].

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12. Zechariah did not know when that day would come to pass; but who did know?

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13. Who did Jesus say longed to see his day? [John 8:56].

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14. Did Abraham's longing to see Jesus' Day of Atonement prove that it had been foreordained?

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15. Who else beside Abraham longed to see Jesus and the Day of Atonement? [Matt. 13:17; Lu. 10:24].

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16. What high priest foretold of Jesus' death during the time that Jesus lived? [John 11:49-51].

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17. Who did this high priest say that Jesus would die for? [John 11:51].

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### Notes

## Jesus alone made atonement

John the baptizer knew that it was Jesus who would make atonement and take away the sins of the world: (*John 1:29*) “*The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*” I find it very interesting that John referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God because Jesus was the true Lamb or Sacrifice required and appointed by God. John points out Jesus and calls him emphatically the Lamb of God. All lambs that had previously been offered had been furnished by men; now God would offer his lamb and as John so states God’s lamb would take away the sin of the world. This lamb was different than other lambs that had been offered: First, it was the Lamb of God; the most excellent. Second, this lamb made atonement for sin; and carried sin away in reality while the others only did so representatively. Third, this lamb carried away the sin of the world, whereas the other lambs were only offered on behalf to the Jewish people. When Jesus made atonement for our sins by his sacrifice salvation was offered to the whole world; both Jews and Gentiles. John could have spoken of Jesus as a physical lamb because Jesus and lambs had many things in common: both were harmless, innocent, meek and humble; but John was referring to Jesus in a spiritual sense because he stated that Jesus was the Lamb of God who was capable of taking away the sin of the whole world.

In a sermon Peter told them that a physical lamb could not take away sin when he said there is no other name whereby anyone can obtain salvation: (*Acts 4:12*) “*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.*” No other name or plan of salvation has ever been devised by God whereby we may obtain salvation. Search the whole world that is under heaven and you will not find another name whereby you may have salvation; atonement may only be gained in the name of Jesus Christ, Even before the birth of Jesus an angel informed Joseph what his name would be and that he would provide salvation for his people: (*Matthew 1:20-21 (KJV)*) <sup>20</sup>*But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. <sup>21</sup>And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

In the religious world today you will find division and a lot of it; we should not think this strange as there was division in the early church, especially in the church at Corinth: (*1 Corinthians 1:10-13*) “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the*

*name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. <sup>11</sup>For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. <sup>12</sup>Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. <sup>13</sup>Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"* In my opinion most of these were good people who were seeking atonement but were doing so in the wrong name. Paul presents the Corinthians with some soul searching questions when he asked; "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" This should have made them stop and think about where their real atonement came from; Paul was not crucified for them it was Jesus Christ, the Son of God who died on the old rugged cross and shed his blood for them so that they might have remission of their sins and be at one with God.

Jesus alone has delivered us from the wrath that awaits sinners: (*1 Thessalonians 1:10*) "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come." The wrath of God is reserved for all the children of disobedience and all mankind is deserving of this wrath because we all have sinned: (*Romans 3:23*) "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;". But thanks be to God Christians do not have to fear this because Christ has bore their sins upon the cross for them. This friend is what atonement is all about. Doesn't it ease your heart and mind to know that you have nothing to fear in the world that is to come?

Jesus alone tasted death for every man: (*Hebrews 2:9*) "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." This verse certainly brings light to Paul's question of "Was Paul crucified for you?" [1 Cor. 1:13]. Jesus was made a little lower than the angels by becoming a man; when he did this he assumed a body that was frail and mortal, capable of dying that was necessary so that he might taste death for every man. "Taste death", is a Jewish phrase, often to be met with in Rabbinical writings. What moved God to make Jesus lower than the angels and deliver him up to death was not any anger towards Jesus nor did God ever have any disregard toward Jesus; neither did Jesus ever deserve the death that he suffered; rather it was God's grace and love to man that caused God to give Christ as a ransom for man's sin and thusly Jesus became our atonement for our sins. God preordained that Jesus

would be our Lamb and would offer himself as our sacrifice. We can truly say that Christ died in our stead.

## Jesus alone made atonement questions

1. When John the baptizer pointed to and referred to someone as the Lamb of God who was he referring to? [Jn. 1:29].

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2. What would the Lamb of God do? [Jn. 1:29].

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3. Who provided this lamb that would become a sacrifice; man or God?

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4. Under the Old Covenant who were the lambs offered for?

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5. Who is offered salvation today?

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6. In what ways is Jesus similar to a physical lamb?

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7. In what ways is Jesus different from the physical lamb?

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8. To whom should we turn for salvation? [Acts 4:12].

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9. How many names are there whereby we may gain salvation?

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10. What did the angel tell Joseph before the birth of Jesus? [Matt. 1:21].

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11. Was Paul crucified for the Corinthians? [1 Cor. 1:10-13].

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12. Who did Paul say we are to wait for? [1 Thess. 1:10].

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13. What has Jesus delivered us from? [1 Thess. 1:10].

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14. Who has committed sin? [Rom. 3:23].

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15. As a Christian do you have anything to fear in the world that is to come?

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16. Who tasted death for every man? [Heb. 2:9].

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17. Why was Jesus made a “little lower than angels” [Heb. 2:9].

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18. Do you think that the grace of God was involved when He made Jesus a little lower than the angels?

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### **Notes**

## Jesus offered himself only once as our atonement

Unlike the sacrifices that were made under the Law of Moses [actually it was God's Law that Moses gave to the people] Jesus only had to offer himself as our sacrifice once: (*Hebrews 7:27*) "*Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.*" Unlike the priests who served under the Law of Moses Jesus did not have to offer a sacrifice for himself before he could make a sacrifice for us: (*Leviticus 16:6*) "*And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.*" Aaron was like you and me, he committed sin and therefore he must first offer a sacrifice for himself and his house before he could rightfully offer sacrifices for the people to God. Aaron was a high priest; we too have a high priest: (*Hebrews 3:1*) "*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;*" (*Hebrews 4:14*) "*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.*" Jesus did not have to first offer a sacrifice for himself before making a sacrifice for you and me because unlike Aaron Jesus did not sin: (*1 Peter 2:22*) "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:*" This explains why Jesus did not have to first offer a sacrifice for his sin before offering the one sacrifice for our sins as was the case with Aaron and all other high priests that followed Aaron.

The Hebrews writer explains more completely why Jesus only had to make one sacrifice: (*Hebrews 9:24-28*) "*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: <sup>25</sup>Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; <sup>26</sup>For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. <sup>27</sup>And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: <sup>28</sup>So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.*" The sacrifice that Jesus offered was perfect; therefore, he only had to offer one sacrifice to appease God. Jesus did not have to offer himself again and again because justice was satisfied, the law fulfilled, sin done away with and through his sacrifice our complete salvation was obtained. Aaron had to offer a sacrifice for himself then for each of the children of Israel but verse Hebrews 9:28 tells us that the sacrifice that Jesus offered was for many. Verse twenty seven is a verse that we often hear quoted and rightly so because man needs to be reminded that he will die and

that he must face the judgment. It is often stated that we cannot escape death or taxes; but it should also be remembered that we cannot escape the judgment. But the faithful Christian should not have any fear of the judgment because the Lord has made atonement for our sins.

Let no one think that this sacrificing of himself was an easy task for Jesus; as Peter explains he suffered: (*1 Peter 3:18*) "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:*" We must understand that Jesus did not suffer for his sin; no, he suffered for our sins. Please take notice that the word "once" also appears in this scripture reference. Thus once again it is proven that Jesus offered his sacrifice but one time. Perhaps you are wondering why Peter mentioned the suffering of Christ; may I suggest that Peter's design of mentioning Christ's suffering was to remind them and us that our Lord suffered as an innocent being and not for any wrong that he had done, furthermore this was written to encourage and comfort them in their sufferings by the example of Jesus. Peter mentions another important fact when he wrote "the just for the unjust". Let us reflect upon this suffering for a moment; Jesus suffered not only by unjust men, by the Jews, by Pilate, the Roman soldiers he suffered for unjust men and women; sinners like you and me. Since Christ was willing to suffer for you and me should we not also be willing to suffer for him? And since Christ who in the head of his church suffered shouldn't we as members of that church be willing to suffer for his sake? Our suffering will only last during this life; in heaven there will be no suffering of any kind: (*Revelation 21:4*) "*And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*" Why was he willing to suffer like this? He suffered so that he might bring us sinners to God. In doing so atonement was completed and we who are unjust can now be justified, we are at one with God.

In 1 Peter 3:18 Peter stated that Jesus was put to death; this was the same death that you and I face; our Lord's body and soul were disunited. If Peter's message had stopped there it would indeed be very sad but Peter added that Jesus was quickened by the Spirit". As you know this simply means that Jesus was raised from the dead. The enemies of Christ could do nothing more than to put him to death; but God is more powerful and He raised Christ from the dead by the Spirit. After Jesus sacrificed himself and suffered once the power of God took over.

Jesus offered his sacrifice only once questions

1. Why did Aaron have to offer a sacrifice for himself and his house before offering the people's sacrifice? [Lev. 16:6].

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2. Did Jesus have to first offer a sacrifice for his sin before offering a sacrifice for us? [Heb. 7:27].

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3. Why didn't Jesus first have to offer a sacrifice for himself? [1 Pet. 2:22].

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4. Who is our high priest? [Heb. 3:1; 4:14].

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5. Was the sacrifice that Jesus offered for just one person? [Heb. 9:28].

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6. Hebrews 9:27 reminds us of two things that await us; what are they?

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7. Should the faithful Christian fear the judgment?

If not, why not?

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8. How many times did Jesus suffer for our sins? [1 Pet. 3:18].

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9. How has the suffering of Jesus benefitted you and me? [1 Pet. 3:18].

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10. Since Christ suffered for you are you willing to suffer for his sake while on this earth?

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11. Will there be any suffering in heaven? [Rev. 21:4].

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12. When Christ died was it the same death that we face?

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13. What did Peter mean when he wrote that Jesus was “quickenened by the Spirit”? [1 Pet. 3:18].

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### **Notes**

## Conclusion

Unlike the Old Covenant where sacrifices had to be offered yearly to obtain atonement Christ made one sacrifice that will be effective until the end of ages. We are assured that if we hear, believe and obey the gospel's commandments we shall have atonement for our sins. This is a message that we can share [and should share] with those who are outside of the body of Christ.

As Christians we have a lot to be thankful for. We are to be thankful to God for his love: *(John 3:16) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* And we should also be thankful to Jesus Christ for the sacrifice that he made. Remembering that Jesus did not deserve to be punished and put to death. He paid the price that we deserve; throughout his rather short lifetime he never once did anything that deserved the pain, suffering and the horrible death that he died.

I do hope that you remember to thank both God and His only begotten Son for all that they have done for us. This is all of the payment that God desires and expects of us.

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Written and published by  
Buddy J. Duncan  
Sedalia, Mo. 65301

Buddy is a 75 year old evangelist who has been preaching the gospel for nearly 45 years. He is presently preaching fill-in and teaching a Bible class.

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