

## The Blood of Jesus #2: Atonement for Sins

Rev. 12:11 says we overcome the devil “**by the blood of the Lamb**”, and by the word of our testimony; and because we love not our lives unto the death. This is not passive, but active resistance on our part by our appeals to, and application of Jesus’ blood. This is one form of spiritual warfare.

Last time we had an introduction of the importance of the blood of Jesus, and in particular as it is the sign of the new covenant. This time the stress will be on the regular and voluntary sacrifices of the OT, and how they have their fulfillment and efficacy in the shedding of Christ’s blood, as the perfect and ultimate sacrifice.

Examples of these OT sacrifices are the morning and evening, and monthly sacrifices for national sins, voluntary sacrifices for personal sins (sin, peace, trespass, burnt offerings), and the special sacrifices of the annual feasts, like Passover and the Day of Atonement. Without getting into all the details and distinctions of all the different types of offerings, the common elements are that a person would bring the animal, confess their sins upon it, and kill it, The priest would then perform various things with the body and the blood, and the end result was “it shall be accepted for him to make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.”

**Were the OT people really forgiven?** Definitely (it says so plainly), but then why did Jesus need to die? Because those sacrifices were not effective in and of themselves (Heb. 10:4 – “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”). The OT sacrifices were made in obedience to God’s command, and their real effectiveness was only “ratified” by the eventual sacrifice of Christ. Without that, they would have been nothing more than a bunch of dead animals. In the same way that our “communion” is a memorial or remembrance of what Jesus did in the past, the OT sacrifices were looking forward to that future sacrifice of Christ. They surely didn’t understand that at the time, but they didn’t need to.

**Why were there so many different kinds of sacrifices in the OT?** Because each one showed a different aspect or truth in what would ultimately happen with the sacrifice of God’s Son. e.g., forgiveness, cleansing, consecration, redemption, “taking away” our sins, and more.

So what does the NT say that would lead us to think that **Christ’s death was sacrificial**, and was a fulfillment of everything the OT sacrifices imperfectly portrayed?

Jn. 1:29 – Behold the **Lamb of God**, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Eph. 5:2 – “And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and **hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God** for a sweetsmelling savour.”

1 Cor.5:7 – “For even **Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.**”

### **What are the effects of this sacrifice?**

- From God’s side, His wrath against sin is appeased, justice is satisfied, and His elect have been redeemed.
- From our side, we receive forgiveness and cleansing, new life, and a new relationship to God (at peace, reconciled, purchased).

### **Justification**

Previously we were guilty and corrupt, and alienated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18). We were under the just and righteous condemnation of God. His forbearance gives us time either to repent, or to add to our guilt (Rom. 2:3-6).

But now we are justified by faith – not merely believing, but believing that He has justified us based on the shedding of Jesus’ blood. Rom. 5:1, 5:6-11. So justification is the act of God whereby he counts us as just, freed from sin and the deserved punishment, by His acceptance of Christ’s sacrifice on our behalf. v. 9 - Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

### **Propitiation**

Propitiation could be thought of as satisfaction - that God's wrath is satisfied, because justice has been done. Christ really paid the penalty for our guilt.

Rom. 3:25-26 – "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."

### **Atonement, Reconciliation**

To atone is literally "to cover". That is, our sins are "covered" from God's eyes (obviously not that He is unable to see them, but that He chooses not to consider them, based on the blood of the sacrifice). It is then used to mean

- reconciliation (to put differing accounts into agreement, to remove the separation caused by offense)
- reparation (payment against offenses or damages)
- expiation (to atone for, to make or pay reparations, make amends, pay for)
- pacification (to be at peace with a former foe)
- pardon (removal of penalty)
- to be made free from previous accusations and liabilities

Rom. 5:11 – And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. ("atonement" in many other versions is "reconciliation")

Col. 1:20 - And, having made peace through the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.