

**Xenos Christian Fellowship
Christian Ministry Light Unit 1
Introduction to Theology
Week 5 – Substitutionary Atonement**

Editors' note:

- *Italics (lower case or ALL CAPS) show what students should write in their student outline.*
- **Bold (including bold italics and bold ALL CAPS) shows what appears in the student outline.**
- Regular text is used for lecture notes; ALL CAPS are used for emphasis.

Overview

- [Introduction](#)
- [Progressive Revelation of Substitutionary Atonement](#)
 - [Pre-Cross](#)
 - [At the Cross](#)
 - [Post-Cross](#)
- [Concluding Observations](#)
- [Memory Verses](#)
- [Assignment](#)

Introduction:

For the next three weeks, we will be studying...

Soteriology: *the study of salvation.*

This week:

- How did God make our salvation possible?

Week 6:

- How does salvation change our standing with God?
- Is our salvation secure, or can we lose it?

Week 7:

- Do we choose our salvation, or does God determine in advance who will be saved?

"Don't all religions teach the same basic things?"

Religions of the world differ in important ways over very central issues, including the nature of salvation.

Humanity's dilemma: True Moral Guilt

There is a fundamental difference between monotheism's and pantheism's view of humanity's main dilemma. Monotheistic religions like Christianity, Islam, and Judaism teach that humans bear TRUE MORAL GUILT (i.e. objective guilt before God because of our violations against his character vs. subjective guilt feelings toward others) before a righteous God (DIAGRAM WALL BETWEEN US and GOD). See Ps. 14:3; Is. 59:2; Jas. 2:10; Matt. 5:20-48 for examples of passages that speak of true moral guilt. Pantheistic religions teach that our root problem is ignorance of our oneness with God.

God's solution to man's dilemma: Substitutionary Atonement

In Pantheism, man's dilemma is resolved when we let go of the illusion of personality and realize we are one with all that is. Monotheistic religions, though, must deal with the problem of true moral guilt, and even here there are vast differences. Most religions teach that we receive salvation through human merit.

e.g. In Islam, Allah extends his grace only to those whose good deeds outweigh their bad ones. "To those who believe AND do deeds of righteousness hath Allah promised forgiveness and a great reward" (Surah 5:9). "And He answers those who believe and do good deeds, and gives them more out of His grace; and (as for) the unbelievers, they shall have a severe punishment," (Surah 42:26)

e.g. Mormons deny that "faith," by itself can save a person. Those who would be saved must continue in good works.

Christianity, by contrast, teaches that God deals with the problem of human guilt through substitutionary atonement.

Substitutionary Atonement: *God in his love provides a blameless substitute to bear his righteous judgment of our sins.*

This concept is a "given" in the biblical revelation. We can demonstrate its logical coherence (i.e., the only way a righteous God could accept sinful people without compromising his character is by punishing someone in our place), and we can provide analogies of it from human life (CIVIL WAR DRAFT; IRS DEBT)—but we cannot prove its necessity.

God was not *obligated* in any way (by anything in us or outside himself) to provide atonement for us; it is a free, unmerited gift extended by him. The motivation for the atonement comes from within God himself—his

righteousness and justice demand the payment of death for our sins, and because of his love and mercy he provides that payment for us himself. According to the Bible, the only way God can do this is through the death of his own Son (Gal. 2:21). Knowing this ought to stir within Christians a deep sense of gratitude that God, in his love, has found away to restore his relationship with us.

Progressive Revelation of Substitutionary Atonement

The term "progressive revelation" refers to how God reveals himself and his plan *gradually* over time. Substitutionary atonement is not a New Testament innovation, contrary to this charge by many Jews and Muslims. God instituted it and taught it from the earliest times after the Fall. That's why Paul says it was "witnessed by the law and the prophets." (Rom 3:21) On Week #1, we traced the lineage of the "seed" and studied how the seed would REDEEM HUMANITY and RESTORE GOD'S RULE. Most of those passages we looked at referred to Christ's kingly rule (2nd coming). Now let's look at how the Old Testament develops the idea of God redeeming humanity (1st coming) through substitutionary atonement.

Pre-Cross:

Genesis 3:21 – Clothing for Adam and Eve

(Genesis 3:21) And the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

Adam and Eve were ashamed of their nakedness after they sinned (3:7,8). This was a subjective experience of their objective moral guilt before God. God rejected their unsuccessful attempt to cover their shame with fig-leaves. And out of love, God provided clothing for them—clothing made from animal skins. Was God teaching Adam and Eve that a death had to occur for their shame to be covered?

(Francis Schaeffer) "Immediately after their rebellion, (Adam and Eve) were now afraid and tried to cover themselves. But in verse 21, God took this covering away and gave them a coat of skins . . . Probably, these were the first animals to die. This indicates, I believe, that man could not stand before God in his own covering. Rather, he needed a covering from God . . . that required sacrifice and death—a covering provided not by man but by God. One would want to be careful not to press this into dogma . . . but (I believe) that this was the beginning of the Old Testament sacrificial system ... (Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis In Space and Time*, p. 105,106)

(Keil and Delitzsch) "By selecting the skins of beasts for the clothing of the first (people), and therefore causing the death or slaughter of beasts for that purpose, he showed them how they might use the sovereignty they possessed over the animals for their own good, and even sacrifice animal life for the preservation of humans; so that *this act of God laid the foundation for the sacrifices . . .* Clothed in this sign of mercy, the man was driven out of Paradise, to bear the punishment of his sin . . . " (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 106)

Summary: *Death of animals to cover shame and guilt?*

Genesis 4:3-5 – Cain and Abel’s offerings

(Genesis 4:3-5) So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. (4) And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. (5) So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

God has apparently already instructed Adam and his children that they must approach him through sacrifice.

Why was Abel’s sacrifice acceptable? It was offered by faith (Hebrews 11:4). This attitude may be reflected in the description of Abel’s offering - “firstlings” and “fat portions.”

Why was Cain’s sacrifice rejected? Apparently because it was not offered by faith. Notice that Cain’s sacrifice is simply referred to as “an offering.”

Was Abel’s sacrifice also acceptable because it was animal (inferred from later revelation)? Was Cain’s offering unacceptable because he insisted on approaching God his own way, through the fruit of his own labors?

At minimum, we can say there is evidence, even at this early stage, that...

Summary: *Humans are instructed to approach God through sacrifice.*

Genesis 8:20,21 – Noah’s sacrifice

(Gen. 8:20,21) Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; (21) and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

Noah had obviously been instructed about animal sacrifice—including which animals were "clean" (i.e., of God's choosing). Gen. 7:2,3 says God had them take "sevens" of clean animals (see 6:19). This sacrifice is connected (in context) with the idea of avoiding God's judgment. It is an acceptable sacrifice, because God responds with a promise never to destroy the earth by flood again. Because of human depravity (8:21), we are dependent upon God's mercy and forbearance. The sacrifice is probably thus a picture of *how* God extends that mercy.

IF TIME, ANTHROPOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR "ORIGINAL RELIGION" (MONOTHEISM and SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE) MATERIAL GOES HERE. See Robert Brow in *Eerdman's Handbook to the World Religions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 30-48. Don Richardson's *Eternity in Their Hearts* also provides some examples of this.

Aside on **contrast between Pagan and Christian sacrifice:**

Pagan	Judeo-Christian
The gods’ wrath is arbitrary and capricious.	God's wrath is clear, rational, and dependable.
The worshipper innovates ways to appease the gods.	God ordains and prescribes the way to appease him.
Sacrifice is an animal, vegetable, or mineral.	Sacrifice is ultimately God himself in human form.
Sacrifice is often viewed as meeting a physical need (hunger, sensuality).	Sacrifice satisfies God's righteous anger for our sins.

Summary: *God extends mercy to sinful human beings through sacrifice.*

Gen. 22:1-14 – Abraham's offering of Isaac

What do we learn about substitutionary atonement from this passage?

- Abraham and Isaac had knowledge about animal sacrifice, including what would serve as an acceptable animal (vs. 7,8).
- God orchestrated this event, in part, as a prophetic type of the way he would provide a sacrifice for our sins.
 - Verse 14 is a prediction that God would one day provide his sacrifice on Mount Moriah. Mount Moriah is the site of Jerusalem, the Temple (2 Chronicles 3:1), and Jesus' death.
 - God, like Abraham, offered up "his son, his only son, whom he loved" (Jn. 3:16 probably purposefully echoes this wording).
 - Jesus, like Isaac, carried the instrument of his own death to the site (Jn. 19:17).
 - Isaac was old enough to carry wood for the sacrifice up the mountain. We can infer from this that he was probably in his teen years or older. It's unlikely that Abraham in his old age could have forced Isaac down on the altar. Isaac likely offered himself voluntarily in faith, just like Jesus did.
 - Isaac's deliverance from death was a prophetic type of Jesus' resurrection (see Heb. 11:19).
 - Isaac was the progenitor of the promised "seed" (Gen. 12:3). Through this event, God explains further *how* the "Seed" would make God's blessing available to all the nations – by dying a substitutionary death.
 - This entire event helps us understand the horrible cost of Jesus' sacrifice. When Abraham was about to plunge his knife into his son Isaac, God told him to stop. But no one told God to stop when he sacrificed his only son for us.

Additional notes:

- Although Abraham evidently did not yet know this, *God later made it very clear that he detested child sacrifice* as a form of religious worship (Lev. 18:21; Jer. 32:35). Furthermore, it is not intrinsically morally objectionable for God to require the life of human

beings. He does this ultimately at judgment, and he required the life of his own Son.

- *Jesus may have actually been "the angel of the Lord"* who directed him not to kill Isaac but offer up the ram instead. Vs 12 indicates that the angel of the Lord, while he speaks of God in the third person, is also the One to whom the sacrifice is offered. See also Judges 13:18,22.
- Was Jesus referring to this incident in Jn. 8:56,57? "My day" may well refer to Jesus' crucifixion ("my hour;" "my time"). Jesus may be saying that Abraham saw in this event a picture of Jesus' most important act, and act that would bless the entire world, as God promised in Genesis 12:1-3.

Summary: *Location (Moriah) of a future sacrifice; the identity (only Son) of God's substitute; resurrection; picture of the horrible cost.*

Exodus 12:1-14 – The Passover meal

The good news is that God is going to judge Egypt so that Pharaoh will let God's people go. The bad news is that the Israelites will be judged also—unless they observe this ritual. If they do observe it, his judgment will "pass over" those houses. Note these key elements in the ritual meal:

- The sacrifice must be *without physical defect* (vs 5).
- It must be *killed* (vs 6).
- Its *blood* (proof of its death) is what causes God's judgment to "pass over" (vs 7,22,23).
- Displaying the blood, eating in haste (unleavened bread), and being dressed in readiness demonstrated their faith that God would deliver them through his appointed means. God's provision must be appropriated through faith.
- God commanded that they celebrate Passover yearly as a memorial (Ex. 12:14,26,27).
- God commanded that they celebrate Passover *in the land* (vs 25). Eventually God specified that Passover be celebrated in Jerusalem (Deuteronomy 16:5,6; 2 Chronicles 6:6). This has prophetic significance, as we shall see.

Summary: *Substitute must be without defect; individuals must place faith in the death of the substitute to avoid judgment; location of sacrifice (Jerusalem).*

Leviticus 4 – Sin Offerings

The tabernacle was a mobile tent that God ordered the nation of Israel to put up every time they pitched camp. It illustrated his desire to dwell among his people, the problem that prevented him from fully doing this—and the solution he would one day provide for this problem. The problem is human sinfulness, illustrated by the physical barriers (veils before the holy place and the holy of holies) and the necessity of priests. The solution is substitutionary atonement offered through God's chosen mediator-priest. This chapter describes four different situations where a sacrifice is required.

Discussion: Ask the students to draw on their homework and state what the common elements were in each of the four sacrifices in Leviticus 4. Common elements include:

- They must slay an animal of God's choosing that is without defect, a blameless substitute (vs. 3,23,28,32).
- The person offering the sacrifice must lay his hands on the animal's head, symbolically identifying the sacrifice with his sins (vs. 4,15,24,29,33).
- The priest must offer the animal for them. He serves as a mediator between the sinful person and God (vs. 5,16,25,30,34). Because this was only a picture, the priests had to offer a sacrifice for their own sins before they could act as a mediator for others.
- They had to go through these grisly ritual sacrifices virtually every day (see Hebrews 7:27; 10:11). This not only kept them focused on the problem of sin and God's remedy (substitutionary atonement); it also indicated that these sacrifices were ultimately insufficient (Heb. 10:1-4), in that the people had no direct access to God, and they had no assurance of complete forgiveness.

Additional information for instructors:

"Unintentional sins" (vs. 2,22,27; Numbers 15:27-29) evidently refer to sins that do not involve an intentional rejection of God and/or his provision for forgiveness.

"Presumptuous sins" (Numbers 15:27-31; Deuteronomy 17:12,13) evidently refer to defiant sins that reject God and

the way he has prescribed to approach him. This is probably what the author of Hebrews means by the phrase “sinning willfully” in Hebrews 10:26-31. God forgives sin, but won't forgive someone who refuses to rely on the provision of Jesus' death to atone for their sin.

Leaders were required to offer male goats (Lev. 4:22,23), while common people were required to offer female goats (Lev. 4:27,28). Since male goats were more valuable because of their greater capacity to produce offspring, those in positions of greater responsibility evidently had to make more costly sacrifices.

Summary: *Sin separates God and man; identification of sin with the sacrifice; need for a mediator; sacrifice atones for sin.*

Leviticus 16 - Day of Atonement Symbolism**

Instructors: You may find it helpful to use overheads that show the layout of the temple and the contents of the Ark of the Covenant.

Vs. 1,2: AARON'S TWO SONS: Aaron's sons were killed because they offered "strange fire" (Leviticus 10:1-3). We may come into God's presence only in the way which he prescribes—or else his holiness will consume us. (This is an example of "presumptuous sin.")

Vs. 3-6: THE HIGH PRIEST: The high priest is the only one who can enter the Holy of Holies (v. 4). He must dress and bathe in a way which symbolizes purity (v. 4). He symbolizes God's chosen mediator. The high priest must offer a sacrifice for his own sins (v. 11) – one of the inferiorities of this symbolic system (Hebrews 7:26-28).

Vs. 7-10, 15-17:

The Ark of the Covenant: The Ark of the Covenant was a box a little larger than a family-size cooler (roughly 45"x27"x27"). It resided in the Holy of Holies, a cube-shaped room in the center of the tabernacle. The phrase "Ark of the Covenant" literally means the "box of the evidence." The contents of the Ark were an indictment against the sins of the people (MANNA: rejection of God's provision – Exodus 16:32-34; ROD: rejection of God's leadership – Numbers 17:10; TABLETS: rebellion and

stubbornness – Deuteronomy 31:26,27).¹ See Exodus 25:10-22 for a detailed description of the Ark.

Mercy Seat: The Ark was covered by a lid called “the mercy seat.” Two cherubim (angels often associated with God’s righteousness) were attached to the mercy seat, one on either end. They faced each other and looked down onto the top of the mercy seat. Their downward look symbolized God’s focus on the sins of the people.

Two goats: Both goats are sin-offerings representing the nation of Israel (v. 5). The fact that they are chosen by lots for their roles (v. 8) teaches that the sacrifice is chosen by God rather than by humans. The fact that they are offered to the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting may emphasize that God is communicating substitutionary atonement to all the people. It may also symbolize Christ’s public death.

The high priest slays one of the goats and offers its blood on the mercy seat (“mercy” means “to cover” or “to atone”) to atone for the nation’s sins that year (vs. 16,17). This symbolizes the death of a blameless substitute for the guilt of our sins.

The high priest then lays his hands on the other goat and confesses Israel’s sins as he does so – symbolizing identification. Then he chases the animal off to the wilderness. This symbolizes that fact that the guilt of their sins has been sent off because of the atoning death of the substitute (vs. 20-22). In the New Testament, the Greek word *aphiemi* (usually translated as “forgiveness”) means “a sending off/away.”

The Day of Atonement is a powerful symbol of God’s provision for dealing with our true moral guilt – God removes our sin from us through the death of a substitute. As we saw in Leviticus 4, the fact that this sacrifice had to be reenacted year after year indicated the insufficiency of the system (Hebrews 10:1-4).

¹ Instructors: We are assuming that when the ark was in the tabernacle, it contained manna, Aaron’s rod, and the Law (see Ex. 16:33-34; Num. 17:1-11; Ex. 25:16;31:16; Heb. 9:4). But when the ark was moved to Solomon’s temple, the ark apparently only contained the tablets of the law (1 Kings 8:9).

Summary: *Greater development of separation caused by sin; removal of guilt through the death of a substitute; the priest must be "clean"; emergence of the priest from holy of holies signifies God's acceptance of the sacrifice*

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 – The Anonymous Servant**

This passage shows that God never viewed the animal sacrifices as efficacious in themselves. They were always a prophetic picture of God's chosen Servant—a blameless Jewish person whose voluntary death would pay for humanity's sins. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the culmination of four passages that progressively reveal more information about the suffering servant (42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-11). Note the repeated emphasis on substitutionary atonement:

53:5 " ... pierced through for our transgressions ... crushed for our iniquities ... by his scourging we are healed ... "

53:6 " ... the Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him ... "

53:8 " ... he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due ... "

53:10 " ... if he would render himself as a guilt offering ... "

53:11 " ... as he will bear their iniquities ... "

53:12 " ... he himself bore the sin of many ... "

52:14,15 " ... he will sprinkle many nations ... " The death of the Servant (Jesus) will be the basis of forgiveness for the whole world. See also "my servant will justify the many" in 53:11.

Instructors: Some commentators translate the Hebrew word "nazah", here translated "sprinkle", as to "startle." But there are good reasons for selecting "sprinkle" as the best rendering. (1) This form of the word is used in only one other place in the OT - Leviticus 16:14 - where it is also translated "sprinkle" (the high priest sprinkles blood on mercy seat to atone for sin). (2) In Isaiah 52:15 and in Leviticus 16:14, "nazah" is in the "Hiphil imperfect" form (future causative), which is always translated "to sprinkle." - See Koehler and Baumgardner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT v. 2* (Brill, 1995), 683.

Also note what a clear picture this is of Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection! Instructors: we'll cover this passage again in Christian Ministry 2 where we'll emphasize how this passage predicted other elements of Jesus life (53:2,3), death ("pierced" & "scourged" – 53:5, "he did not open his mouth" – 53:7, "cut off out of the land of the living" – 53:8, "grave assigned with wicked men" & "with a rich man in his death" – 53:9, and resurrection ("prolong his days" – 53:10).

What about the Servant described in the past tense? This is a stylistic device ("prophetic past tense"), in which God often describes future events in the past tense to emphasize his sovereignty over human history (e.g. Jeremiah 51:24-32). Furthermore, the context indicates that this Servant's death is a future event (see "will" in 52:13-15; 53:11).

What about the view that the Servant is the nation of Israel? 53:8 says the Servant is killed "FOR the transgression of my people." He is also righteous, unlike Israel. He is described as an individual, not as a nation.

Summary: *God will send a blameless human to atone for humanity's sin; he will die and be resurrected.*

John 1:29 – The Lamb of God

(John 1:29) The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Jesus was not just a brilliant man who devised a new religion that millions today follow. His ministry, life, death and resurrection were foreshadowed by centuries of prophecy all pointing to him, all indicating that one day, a human being would stand in humanity's place as a substitute and atone for the sins of world. John declares that Jesus is the fulfillment of the symbolism in the sacrificial system and the stream of prophecy predicting that a man would come and "take away" the sin of the world.

(John 1:14) The word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us.

Jesus is the true tabernacle and his sacrifice is the true sacrifice.

Note: John evidently did not understand that there would be two comings of the Messiah, the first one of which would end in his death. John expected Jesus to be a king, as his question in

Matthew 11:3 makes clear. Like the other Old Testament prophets, John did not understand how these messianic prophecies fit together (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

Summary: *The Person (see above) is Christ.*

Did Jesus understand that he came to atone for human sin?

Steve Chalke and Alan Mann have challenged the notion that Jesus' death atoned for sin. They argue that on the cross, Christ **"absorbed all the pain, all the suffering caused by the breakdown in our relationship with God and in doing so demonstrated the lengths to which a God who is love will go to restore it."** They go on to say, **"...the fact is that the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse - a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offence he has not even committed ... such a concept stands in total contradiction to the statement 'God is love'... The truth is, the cross is a symbol of love. It is a demonstration of just how far God as Father and Jesus as his Son are prepared to go to prove that love. The cross is a vivid statement of the powerlessness of love ... "** – Steve Chalke, Alan Mann *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2004).

How does this statement square with what Jesus says about himself?

(Mark 10:45) For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

Jesus clearly understood that his substitutionary death was his main mission in the first coming. He was there to serve to give his life as a ransom for the many. Jesus did not go to the cross merely to be the perfect expression or example of sacrificial love. The cross *does* communicate this (1 Jn. 4:10; Phil. 2:3-8), but its primary purpose was to actually pay for true moral guilt. Paul insists that unless Jesus' death was atoning, it was needless (Galatians 2:21).

Those that argue Jesus was caught off guard by the events that led to his crucifixion (e.g. Last Temptation of Christ) or that he didn't view his death to be an atonement for sin are ignoring passages the say otherwise. Before he went to the cross, Jesus cited Isaiah 53 and warned his disciples:

(Luke 22:37) "For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, `AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

Summary: *Jesus' substitutionary death was his main mission.*

Matt 26:26-30 – Jesus interprets the Passover meal.

(Matthew 26:26-30) And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." 30 And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Understanding the way the Passover was observed yields additional insight into Jesus' statements. The Synoptic authors seem to only mention the ways that Jesus diverged from the normal Passover liturgy. The head of the household normally passed the bread out in silence—but Jesus spoke, explaining that it represented his body/physical death for them. They normally drank four cups—two before the meal and two afterwards. Each cup represented a different phase in Israel's deliverance from Egypt ("I will bring you out" "I will rid you of their bondage" "I will redeem you" "I will take you for my people" – Exodus 6:6,7). The third cup was called the "cup of redemption," and Jesus explained its significance in vs. 28. The fourth cup was called the "cup of consummation" looking forward to God's future kingdom. In vs. 29, Jesus refuses to drink this cup until he comes back. The Jews customarily ended this meal by singing Ps. 116-118. Note especially Ps. 118:6-9,17,18,22,23, which speak prophetically of Jesus' death and resurrection.²

Note: *Jesus was not teaching (define) transubstantiation here.* First of all, he is already referring to a symbolic meal. Secondly, they knew where his body was (in front of them!) and would understand that he was speaking metaphorically (as he often did—"I am the door;" "I am the true Vine"..

² For more on this see William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark: The English Text With Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), pp. 504-509.

Summary: *Jesus' death is the ultimate fulfillment of the Passover meal*

Luke 22:20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the *new covenant in My blood.*

(Jer. 31:31-34) "Behold, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (32) not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. (33) "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "*I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.* (34) "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for *they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them,*" declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and *their sin I will remember no more.*"

This is a description of New Covenant blessings that had not yet been enacted in Jeremiah's time ("the days are coming"). The blessings include: moral empowering through the Holy Spirit ("my laws within them"), an intimate personal relationship with God ("they shall all know me"), and assurance of forgiveness ("their sin I will remember no more"). By saying his blood poured out for us is a new covenant, Jesus is saying that his death is what makes it possible for God to grant us these blessings (see also Heb. 8:6-12). When Jesus died, Matthew tells us that the temple veil was torn (Matthew 27:50-51) symbolizing the end of the Old Covenant. The way to God is now open to all who come to him through Jesus' atoning death.

Summary: *New Covenant made available through Jesus' death.*

At the Cross:

Jesus died as predicted with regard to:

- **Purpose (Isaiah 52):** *Atone for human sin*
- **Place (Genesis 22; Exodus 12):** *Jerusalem*

- **Time (Exodus 12; Daniel 9):** *Passover, 33 AD*
- **Manner of death (Psalm 22):** *Crucifixion*

Post-Cross:

(1 Cor. 5:7) Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

By calling Jesus “our Passover,” Paul affirms that the primary purpose of Jesus’ death was to atone for sin.

Aside: As mentioned above, Jesus fulfilled the symbolism of the Passover meal, including WHERE and WHEN the Passover was offered. In fact, three spring festivals that Israel celebrated prefigured the work of Christ:

Festival	Purpose	Symbolism
Passover – Leviticus 23:5	Remember how God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt.	Jesus’ death – 1 Corinthians 15:7
First Fruits – Leviticus 23:9-14 (The Sunday after Passover)	Celebrate the first crops of the barley harvest as tangible evidence of a future harvest.	Jesus’ resurrection – 1 Corinthians 15:20-23
Pentecost – Leviticus 23:15-22 (Fifty days after the Sabbath following Passover)	Show joy for a bountiful harvest	Birth of the church and harvest of people coming to Christ. – Acts 2

Discussion: As you read each of these, ask students to state HOW each verse conveys the idea of substitutionary atonement.

(2 Cor. 5:21) He (God) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

This is a clear statement of substitutionary atonement.

(1 Pet. 1:19,20) ... but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.

This was God's plan of the ages.

(1 Pet. 3:18) For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God ...

Another clear statement of substitutionary atonement.

Hebrews 9:11-14, 23-26

Discussion: Read Hebrews 9:11-14 & 23-26. As you read, ask students to point out HOW the Old Covenant sacrificial system was a temporary and incomplete picture of Jesus' sacrifice.

	LEVITICAL SYSTEM (Old Covenant)	JESUS' DEATH (New Covenant)
WHERE?	<i>Earthly tabernacle; temple</i>	<i>Heaven; the presence of God</i>
WHAT?	<i>Animal sacrifices</i>	<i>His own blood</i>
WHEN?	<i>Year after year</i>	<i>Once for all</i>
RESULT?	<i>Ceremonial cleansing only</i>	<i>Full salvation</i>

Romans 3:21-28

This one of the clearest and most comprehensive statements in the Bible concerning substitutionary atonement:

(Rom. 3:21-28) But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, (22) even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (25) whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over

the sins previously committed; (26) for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (27) Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. (28) For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

v. 21 says that the Old Testament clearly taught and predicted salvation through substitutionary atonement.

vs. 23-24* explains the dilemma (our sinfulness and God's righteousness) and concisely explains Jesus' atoning death as the answer.

The Old Testament believers had their sins "passed over" (vs 25) until Jesus paid for them. They were *not* forgiven by the animal sacrifices (Heb. 10:4).

v. 26 summarizes the dilemma we mentioned at the beginning. This is how God can accept sinful people while remaining righteous himself.

Note the repeated emphasis on faith and belief in this passage. This is not universalism (salvation for all regardless of belief), but salvation by grace alone, through Christ alone, through faith alone.

Concluding Observations

- **Substitutionary atonement is the heart of biblical theology/soteriology. Apart from it, there is no salvation!** Any interpretation of what happened on the cross that does not include a full understanding of substitutionary atonement goes against the clear, repeated witness of scripture. Through substitutionary atonement and the cross, we see both how serious our sin problem is to God, and how much he loves us.
- **People have *always* been saved by grace through faith (Hebrews 11:2), and always through Jesus' death.** Old Testament believers were saved by faith through Jesus' *future* death; we are saved by faith in his *past* death. The main differences between us and Old Testament believers are that we know more clearly *how* God made this payment, we know it *has been made*, and we have the *Holy Spirit*.
- **The Old Covenant is now obsolete:** Why is it that we no longer do animal sacrifices? NOT because we now see they are primitive, barbaric, etc., but because they have been fulfilled by the most terrible sacrifice of all! And now

that Jesus has fulfilled the Old Covenant system, it is OBSOLETE (Heb. 8:13).

One implication of this is that New Testament Christianity should not be ritualistic. In the Old Covenant, God prescribed hundreds of rituals in careful detail. In the New Covenant, he prescribes only two rituals and is so general about them that Christians have argued for twenty centuries about how to observe them! Old Covenant worship prescribed a ritualistic approach to God, both because people could not be indwelt by God's Spirit and in order to teach God's people the elements of redemption. But now that Christ has come and God's Spirit indwells us, God wants us to relate to him personally rather than ritualistically. See Paul's explanation of this in Galatians 4:3-11. Roman Catholic and Orthodox insistence on a liturgical and ritualistic spirituality (and the increasing evangelical acceptance of this notion) runs directly counter to God's movement from ritual to personal relationship.

Memory Verses

Leviticus 16 – The Day of Atonement is a clear example of substitutionary atonement for the nation of Israel.**

Isaiah 53 – This passage makes it clear that the Old Testament sacrificial system must be fulfilled by a Person—the Servant of the Lord.**

Romans 3:23,24* – All humans fall justly under God's condemnation because of their sins, but all humans are acceptable to God if they receive Jesus' atoning death for their sins.

Assignment

- Complete the *Security of Salvation Assignment*.