



2 Cor. 3:18

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Who Needed a Sacrifice

Ken Corklin



For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (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; (Rom 3:23-25)

I would like us to consider this text for a moment and see if we can understand what it is really saying. There is a word used which I would like us to especially examine. It is the word, "propitiation." Do we know what a propitiation is? I found a definition in Webster's dictionary explaining what a propitiation is.

Webster's is an American dictionary, and Webster was a man who I believe, lived in the early 1800s. He was one of the first persons who came up with the idea of compiling a dictionary. In his original dictionary there are a lot of good definitions which are very help-

ful when applied to the King James version of the Bible, because the language is very close to that time, and Webster's dictionary contains a lot of theological definitions as well.

Webster's dictionary contains two definitions for "propitiation." The first definition says:

Propitiation: "The act of appeasing wrath and conciliating the favour of an offended person, the act of making propitious."

I think this is a definition that pagans understand very well and would heartily agree with.

The Spirit of Prophecy gives us some insights into what happened when Adam sinned, which are helpful in properly understanding the meaning of this word, "propitiation." When Adam and Eve sinned, God came to them, and the Bible tells us that they were given coats, but not just given coats to wear, they were also given explanations about a few things. They were given explanations about sin and what it was going to cost, and the One who was going to come.

Years later, Cain and Abel came to offer up their sacrifices, and we are told what happened in Genesis chapter 3. Abel offered up the sacrifice which represented what God was going to do for mankind, while Cain decided that he was just going to offer up a sacrifice of his choice, something which represented the labour of his hands. The record tells us that God did not accept Cain's sacrifice.

You know, God was still in communion

with man at this point. Here, in chapter 3 of Genesis, God was still talking to Cain and Abel. Cain offered up the wrong sacrifice and God told him, "look, if you offer up the right sacrifice I will accept it just as I did Abel's." God was still talking with him. In His mercy, God was communicating with Cain so clearly, so intimately, that when Cain killed his brother Abel and the Lord asked, "where is your brother?" Cain was able to literally talk back to God when he asked God, "am I my brother's keeper?" But this was not the end of the story. Something tragic happened as a result of this incident. The Bible tells us very simply that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, stating that God's sentence, the consequence of his crime, was too much for him.

And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. (Gen 4:16)

Do you know what? It is not only Cain, but mankind on the whole which has been out of the presence of the Lord ever since. But the question is, "why?" Let us consider the subsequent history of the descendants of Cain. Of course Abel had no descendants but we know what happened to the descendants of Seth, his godly brother, as far as their

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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Editor: David Clayton
Publishing committee: ... Howard Williams
..... Heather Baxter
..... Jennifer Clayton
..... David Clayton

P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.

Phone: (304) 932-4543
Jamaica: (876) 603-0821

email: david@restorationministry.com
Website: <http://www.restorationministry.com>

relationship with God was concerned. They continued to worship God with their worship including the offering of sacrifices. But what about the descendants of Cain? The descendants of Cain went from offering fruits and vegetables, to offering other sacrifices to appease the wrath of God.

In actual fact, going by Webster's definition, what they offered to God was a propitiation. That's what it was. When you offer a sacrifice because you need to somehow appease God, you are offering a propitiation. The descendants of Cain became experts at sacrifice. They said "uh oh! There's a storm, God must be angry with us!" So they would offer up a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God. This system even survived the great flood in Noah's days and the ideas were passed on somehow by way of at least one of Noah's Sons, Ham. By the time of Nimrod, this was again their natural way of life.

They worshiped the sun, and as the year progressed, the sun would get farther and farther away from the earth and as the sun was receding, it was

getting colder and colder while the days were getting shorter and shorter. So they concluded, "God must be angry with us!" So on December 21, they noticed that the sun was starting to come back. The high priest of Baal, whose name was Canabaaal, (that's where we get the word "cannibal" from), would take a young man, lay him over a stone, and while the man was still alive, would cut into his chest, pull out his heart while it was still beating (the origin of the "sacred heart" of Catholicism), and he would hold it out to the sun to appease the wrath of god. Then four days later, on December 25, they had a big celebration for the re-birth of the sun. Man's misunderstanding of God and His purposes got so bad, men felt that God's wrath towards us was such a terrible thing, that in order to appease Him, we began to sacrifice ourselves!

During the Old Testament history of Israel, this was going on all around them. As a result of their mingling with the nations this had an impact on them.

In 1 Samuel 15:22 Samuel told Saul that God is more interested in obedience than sacrifice. In Psalms 40: 6, the Psalmist teaches us that God does not desire sacrifice and offering. In Psalm 51:16, David says, "for thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it." But even Israel came to believe that somehow, it was God who was being satisfied by their sacrifices and they offered these sacrifices in the belief that in doing this, they were giving God something which He needed. It got so bad that God had to tell them that He was fed up with their sacrifices. (Isa. 1:11)

The truth is, there is only one reason why God ever asked men to offer a sacrifice and it was not to satisfy God! In Hebrews 9:28 the apostle Paul tells us,

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. (Heb 9:28)

Was Jesus offered to appease the wrath of God? E.J. Waggoner makes

a comment in his little book on Romans which is helpful. It is almost funny when we read it, but yet, in a way, it is tragic because it probably describes what we have all believed.

"A propitiation is a sacrifice. The statement then is simply that Christ is set forth to be the sacrifice for the remission of sins. 'Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (Hebrews 9:26).' Of course the idea of a propitiation or sacrifice is that there is wrath to be appeased. But take particular notice that it is we who require the sacrifice, and not God."

Did we get that? We require the sacrifice, God provides the sacrifice. Now remember, Christ was the propitiation, He was the sacrifice for the wrath of somebody or for the offence of somebody, but was it the offence of God, or was it our offence? If the sacrifice was to satisfy God, because He was the one who was offended, then we should be the ones providing the tokens to fix the relationship. But it wasn't God who was offended, it was us. Think about it, would God ever offer a sacrifice to appease Himself? The fact is, it was He who offered the sacrifice to appease you and me! We are the ones with the problem! "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son." Why did He give Him, was it because God needed the sacrifice? No, it was you who needed a sacrifice! We needed a sacrifice, because there's something wrong with us! We ran away from Him because that's what our fallen nature does, we are out of our minds. We run away from God! Did God run away from Adam and Eve when they sinned, or did they run away from God? It is tragic, but true, that most people only go to the altar of God because they are scared out of their wits.

Waggoner goes on to say:

"It is the height of absurdity to say that God is so angry with men

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Why Was The Old Covenant Given?

David Clayton

In this article we take a look at the Old Covenant. Even though it should be an obvious truth, not everyone recognizes that we cannot truly understand the New Covenant unless we first of all understand the Old Covenant and its purpose.

The popular definition of a covenant is that it involves two parties, each of whom agrees to do certain things provided the other party fulfills his part of the bargain. But in the Bible this is not always what a covenant implies.

One example of what I mean is the covenant which God made with the world after the flood of Noah's days. After the flood God said:

I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. (Gen 9:13-15)

Notice that although there were two parties involved in this covenant, God, and every living thing on earth, the **terms** of the covenant involved only one party. It was a promise of what God would do and those who were to benefit from this covenant had absolutely nothing to do. It was theirs regardless of what they did. So this was an agreement that God made with Himself in a sense. It was a promise really, but the Bible refers to it as a covenant. It is important that we understand this, for if we don't understand this concept of a covenant our concept of the New Covenant will most likely be a wrong one.

WHAT IS THE NEW COVENANT?

Adam was the first man who was saved. He was the first man who was lost and he was the first man who re-

ceived salvation. So salvation was from the beginning, from the time of the first generation of men who lived on this planet. But let us ask a question; has man ever being saved by any means other than by the New Covenant?

In Ezekiel 36: 25-27 and Hebrews 8:10-11, God explains the terms of the New Covenant. He says,

Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. (26) A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. (27) And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Ezek 36:25-27)

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: (11) And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. (Heb 8:10-11)

The terms of this New Covenant are simple. All that God did was to make a commitment that He would write his laws in our hearts and in our minds, a pledge that He would put His spirit within us and give us new hearts.

When Adam repented and received salvation in the garden of Eden, did he have this experience? Did he have God's law written upon his heart and his mind and did God remember his sin and his iniquity no more? Was that

promise in Hebrews chapter 8 fulfilled for Adam and Eve?

If we should say that Adam never experienced it then what would be the implications? It would mean that Adam and Eve and all the persons who lived during those early generations did not experience the renewal of the holy spirit, that in fact nobody was born again back in those days, and in fact, we would either have to conclude that nobody from that age could have been saved, or else we would have to believe that there was some other way that God saved them other than the means by which men are saved today.

But we need not be in doubt about this, men have always been saved only in one way, and this is by the new birth (John 3:3), by receiving a new life through the imparting of the spirit of Christ, and so Jesus is said to be, "*the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" (Rev. 13:8). What we call the New Covenant really has to do with a new nature. God made a promise that he would impart a new nature or a new life to His people and that is the basis of the New Covenant. Nobody has ever been saved without that experience! So the New Covenant must have been there from the beginning when man first fell.

THE EVERLASTING COVENANT

So instead of saying, "the New Covenant," it may be more correct to refer to God's way of saving men as "the Everlasting Covenant." The New Covenant is really the Everlasting Covenant.

But why is God's plan of salvation called "New," after the time of Christ, and how is it related to the system which is called "Old?" We will look at that in a moment.

Now the everlasting covenant is the means by which God saves men and there has never been any other means

of salvation. In this covenant God says, "I will put my life within you, I will put my spirit, my laws within you and I will cause you to walk in my ways, and your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." That's the New Covenant. In this New Covenant it is God who does what needs to be done. Man's only part is to believe that God has done it and to accept that it is the truth. The only condition on man's experiencing this New Covenant is that he must believe God's promise.

As we read through the Bible it is clear that many of the faithful men and women of ancient times had a more limited concept of God's nature, God's character and God's ways than we do. But that is why we are saved only by faith. If salvation depended on understanding the law, or upon having an accurate knowledge of doctrine then many of these people could not have been saved. But the New Covenant is based entirely on faith in God's promise. There are no other conditions. Rahab the harlot ignorantly told a lie to demonstrate her faith. The action was faulty, but the motive was right. It was directed by a sincere faith which led her to commit herself to the God of Israel, even though she lied on behalf of the God who never lies. But she is saved because salvation is not based on knowledge of the law. She did not understand the law properly but her faith was in God, and through God, in Christ, and so on the basis of faith she became a partaker of that Everlasting Covenant.

This Everlasting Covenant is the only way that God can justifiably and equitably save people in all cultures, in all ages, because it is not based upon how much a person knows. If a person lived a thousand years ago his knowledge of God's ways was likely to be very different from ours and especially if he never had the Bible. But everybody can have some kind of experience where they can find faith in God and that is the only thing required under the Everlasting Covenant. So we can under-

stand then why God puts salvation on the basis of faith and not works or knowledge.

THE BASIS OF THE OLD COVENANT

Now then, we come to the question, what is the Old Covenant? The Old Covenant is referred to in several ways in the Bible, but it is important that we recognize that one of the terms which refers to this Old Covenant is, "the law," or "the law and the prophets." Generally speaking, the entire system of worship and government which ex-



isted from the time of Moses until the time of Christ was called "the Old Covenant," or "the law." (Gal. 4:24-25; Jer. 31:32). When we see the word "law," here, we are to understand that Paul is speaking of the Old Covenant. That entire system with its rules, its worship, its illustrations, its teachings, its lifestyle and its people.

In Exodus 19 we find the beginning of the Old Covenant and we get an understanding of the principles on which this covenant was based. God introduced this covenant to Moses with the following words:

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my cov-

enant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: (6) And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. (Exo 19:5-6)

And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. (Exo 19:8)

This covenant was not like the covenant which God made with the earth in Noah's day and it was not like the Everlasting Covenant which was strictly based on God's promise, with no requirement of the people except to believe. This covenant required to people to do something before they received any benefit. Paul further reinforces this point in the following verse:

And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. (Gal 3:12)

God made a promise here that they would become a peculiar treasure unto Him above all people and that they would become a kingdom of priests, but there were conditions. They had to obey His voice and keep his covenant and on that condition He would make them a peculiar

treasure unto himself above all other people. This covenant included the entire system of worship and lifestyle which was given to Moses on Mount Sinai, represented by the Ten Commandments as the following verse clearly shows:

And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments. (Exo 34:28)

This is why the box which was built to contain the ten commandments was

called, “the ark of the covenant.” So when God told them to keep His covenant, it is clear that He was referring to obedience to all the law, including the Ten commandments. Under this Old Covenant, this was the condition on which He would bless them and accept them as His people.

The question is, did God expect them to first obey the covenant by keeping His commandments before He blessed them? The answer has to be no. Man cannot do good in order to be accepted of God. It is an impossibility. It can work the other way around, man can first be accepted of God in order that he may do good, but he cannot do good first in order that he may be accepted. If that was what God truly required of men in order that He might save them, then no person could ever be saved. Yet, these are the terms of the Old Covenant.

I should mention at this point that several persons including no less a person than E.J. Waggoner, have suggested that it was not God, but the Israelites who instituted the Old Covenant. I have examined this idea, but I cannot reconcile it with what the Bible says. The very first mention of this covenant is found in Exodus 19:6-8, and the terms are very clear. Right from the very beginning God asks for obedience and makes a condition. He says, “if you will do ... then this will be your reward.” It was a covenant which began with a requirement for the people to do something. They had to obey, they had to keep it.

So it seems very clear to me that it was God who instituted this covenant and of course, the question immediately arises, “why did He do this? If the Everlasting Covenant already existed and is the only way of salvation, why then did God institute something which could not save and which clearly could not be fulfilled by those who promised to fulfill it? Why didn’t He simply emphasize the Everlasting Covenant and lead the people in that way? The Bible gives us several reasons. Let us see what they were.

REASONS FOR THE OLD COVENANT

The purpose of the law was:

- a. To reveal evil, to make men know right from wrong. (Rom. 7:7,13)
- b. To make man know his incapability (Rom. 7:21-23)
- c. To make man know his need. (Rom. 7:18, 24)
- d. To make man know he is lost. (Rom. 5:20)
- e. To promote physical and temporal benefits (Lev. 26:3-12)
- f. To restrain the spread of iniquity (Gal. 3:19)
- g. To illustrate heavenly realities. (Hebrews 9:23)
- h. To illustrate future events. (Colossians 2: 16, 17)
- i. To bring men to Christ (to the new covenant) (Gal. 3:24)

The final text listed above tells us that the law was intended to be our schoolmaster, and this perhaps sums up all the other points. The purpose of the law or the Old Covenant, was to lead men to Christ. In God’s plans, everything has its proper place, everything works step by step in the accomplishing of God’s ultimate purposes. God wants men to come to Christ but in order for them to come to Christ they have to first of all recognize their need. So what does God in his wisdom do? He sets up a system that is bound to let them recognize their need because this is an absolute necessity before they can come to the next stage.

MADE FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS

Now as we have seen, the New Covenant was always there. But let us consider an important question: Who are the only people who can experience the New Covenant? Of course, the answer is, only God’s true people! They are the only ones who have the spirit of God in them, enabling them to walk in the ways of God.

On the other hand, who is it that the law leads to Christ? And of course, the answer is, those who are not God’s

people. So if we follow this reasoning we can clearly see that the Old Covenant is *not* for God’s true people. The Old Covenant is for those who are not God’s people. (1 Tim. 1:9)

Now when you understand that the everlasting covenant or the New Covenant has always existed then something else begins to come into your mind. If the Old Covenant is God’s appointed way to lead people to Christ then it stands to reason that the Old Covenant must always have existed along with the New Covenant. If there was always the New Covenant from the beginning, then there must have also been a way that men could have been led to Christ from the beginning, as well. So in a sense, both covenants are not limited to certain periods of time, but are more related to two different experiences. One of them is the experience out of Christ, while the other has to do with the experience in Christ. So it is clear that both these experiences have always been present throughout the ages.

So the question then is, why did God take a group of people (The Israelites) and as a people set them under the Old Covenant system, which in actual fact, signifies the experience outside of Christ. The very fact that they, as a group, were under the Old Covenant means that they, as a group, were outside of Christ.

NOT FOR GOD’S PEOPLE?

What does it mean to be God’s child? It means to be born again. It means to have partaken of Christ’s Spirit (Rom. 8:9). Were Israel as a nation God’s children? Were they, as a nation, born again in reality? The fact is, they never were God’s people in the true sense! So whatever God gave to Israel as a nation, whatever covenant God made with Israel as a nation it was not on the basis of them being truly His people. God’s people have eternal life. Did the Israelites as a nation have eternal life? No! And God never promised them eternal life. Examine the Old Testament and see if God ever promised

them eternal life. Read what God promised those people and you will see that He never promised them eternal life because the Old Covenant does not deal with eternal things, the Old Covenant only deals with benefits in this temporal world.

When Paul says, “we were under the elements of this world (Gal. 4:3),” he was quite right because that is all the Old Covenant could deal with, this world and the benefits of this world. If they carried out a certain kind of behaviour then God would give them certain benefits, temporal benefits. The Old Covenant brought temporal benefits, the New Covenant brings eternal benefits. So when God set up that covenant with the nation of Israel it was not on the basis that they would receive eternal life. You will never find eternal life promised to the Israelites anywhere in the covenant God made with them, because what God set up was not salvation. It could not bring salvation, but was only a symbol of salvation.

Was it possible for any of those Israelites to obtain true salvation? Of course it was possible. anybody in that nation could have found true salvation through true faith, but that had nothing to do with the system that was set up, because as a system, as a people, God set up a school, a teaching aid based upon a principle of, “obey and live.” His promises were, “*Honour your father and your mother that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord giveth thee; I’ll take you to a land flowing with milk and honey.*” That was what they were promised! They were never promised everlasting life on the basis of obedience. God promised them temporal benefits only, because the only condition on which you receive everlasting life and eternal benefits is faith and that is not the basis of the Old Covenant. (Gal. 3:12)

ARE WE SAVED IN GROUPS?

Many of us are always speaking of God’s people, “as a group.” We think of the Israelites as a nation belonging

to God and we tend to think in those same terms when we think of God’s people today. But when we say, “as a nation,” we put our finger on a critical bugging point that confuses and deludes many Christians. Nobody is saved “as a people.” God does not save people corporately, God only saves people as individuals so there is no way that God could have established the everlasting covenant with people, “as a people.” Impossible! God only establishes the everlasting covenant with individuals, because faith must be exercised individually. It cannot be done “as a people,” on a corporate basis. That is why no church group can be truly said to be “God’s people,” as a church. They may be an instrument in God’s hand, used by him to accomplish a certain purpose, but not His people in the sense of having a saving relationship with Him. This can only be experienced on an individual basis.

But God definitely established, and used the Hebrew nation, under the Old Covenant to be a teaching aid to the world. From the moment that Old Covenant was established, those who understood its purpose were able to benefit from it, and even today, every individual in the world who sees that system and studies it carefully is able to see Christ through it. In their carnal self-centeredness, the Hebrews thought the system was established only for their benefit, because they were better than other nations, but God’s purpose was to use them to bless the world in helping the world to find the Messiah. The whole system was just an illustration to demonstrate the realities which are in Christ.

The Israelites became thoroughly confused, and many Christians today have joined them in that confusion, thinking that in that system itself, there was salvation and that God had a greater desire to save the Jews than other people. But God was trying to bless the world by putting, somewhere on this planet a school where people could look and see the way to Christ and see why we needed Him.

USING OUR MISCONCEPTIONS

God has always been working to save men, by any means possible, sometimes even in the most unexpected ways, and from the very beginning God has used man’s misconceptions as a means of bringing him to Christ. There was always the concept among people that if they could only obey and do what was good, then God would be pleased. Those who were honest and sincere soon recognized that all their efforts were getting them nowhere and that they needed help. God used this as a means of bringing them to the place where they could recognize their need of Christ and, through faith in Him, could receive His life and be born again.

Even today the law serves that purpose. It certainly has done that in my life many times. Many times I tried so hard, and why was I trying so hard? Because I was trying to live up to God’s standard and having failed I ended up talking to God and saying, “oh help me! I can’t do it!” It still serves as a schoolmaster. The false idea that we need to obey in order to obtain God’s favour is deeply rooted in man’s psyche and God still uses this false idea, many times to drive us to the end of our rope so we can turn to Christ. The law still serves that purpose.

So in actual fact, both the old and the new (everlasting) covenants co-exist right down to the end of time. But at a certain point in the world’s history, God established a system on a global level as a teaching tool, where one age and one entire nation was established upon this idea of living by obedience. When Christ came the world stepped into another age where the full light of faith and what it means to believe and live became evident.

Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our

Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (2 Tim 1:9-10)

So we divide time into two ages, the age of the Old Covenant and the age of the New Covenant, but in actual fact it does not mean that there are two ways that people could be saved. This is how some people interpret it. They say that because there was an Old Covenant and now there's a New Covenant, God has two different ways of saving people. First he saved them by the Old Covenant, and now He saves by the new, but that is not true! This is a false idea which must be guarded against. Man was ever only saved by the New Covenant, whether in this age, or in any age since the beginning of time.

ONLY OF THIS WORLD

So this brings us to certain conclusions which we need to remember. Nobody could receive everlasting life through the old covenant. Nobody! It never happened, it never will and God never intended that it should be that way. God's blessings under the Old Covenant were only temporal, they had to do with this world and so the commandments associated with this covenant were referred to as, "carnal." (Heb. 7:16). Paul referred to them as, "the elements of the world," (Gal 4:3) "the rudiments of the world." (Col 2:20).

Paul says that under the Old Covenant, we "were in bondage under the elements of the world (Gal 4:3)," referring to the many laws and rules which were given to the Israelites. Many Christians say this could never be referring to the laws given by God. They say that God could never set something in place which could be referred to as being carnal, as being of this world, as being elements of the world. But the fact is, this is all that the Old Covenant was, because the only benefit to be gained from that covenant had to do with this life, with physical things. There was nothing eternal in it, so it is

perfectly right to refer to it as "carnal," and "temporal" and as being "of the elements of this world." It did not deal with eternal realities, in spite of the fact that it was a necessary teaching tool to lead men to those eternal realities.

The Jews felt that salvation was present in the observance of these things. So then they had to bring God down to that level. If you believe that God is going to give you eternal life because you kill some sheep, and because you fix copies of the law onto your forehead, and you observe the ten commandments, what kind of God are you making Him out to be? Your concept of God is bound to be warped.

It is only when you can see that in these things salvation was only illustrated but not realized in reality, that you can look beyond the sheep, you can look beyond the observances of the feast days, the rituals, the letter of the commandments, and you can look at the greater reality and say, "God is a God who deals with realities not with form." But if you think that form and ceremony is what satisfies God, then you bring God down to the baby level, and make Him out to be somebody who does not have much more sense than a human being.

LIMITED PENALTIES AND REWARDS

Now here is a final point for us to consider: Since the Old Covenant pertained to this world and the elements of this world, then the penalties and the promises associated with that covenant were also only temporal. Now please consider carefully what I am about to say, because at this point, some people put on the brakes and refuse to go any farther. We say the promises were only to do with this life, but what about the penalties, were they only temporal or were they eternal? If the promises were temporal what about the penalties?

They had to be temporal also! So if a man was stoned to death because he was picking up sticks on the Sabbath day does it necessarily mean that he has lost his eternal life? Not necessar-

ily! Of course if a man was so much out of touch with God that he would deliberately go and pick up sticks on the Sabbath day this very definitely demonstrates that such a man did not have much of a relationship with God. But suppose that man's wife was at home sick and he went and picked up sticks on the Sabbath day to light a fire in order to make a warm brew, and they caught him, what would they do? They would stone him! Under the Old Covenant this man would die as a sinner! But what about under the everlasting covenant? If this man's faith was right this man would have eternal life, even though he might have been stoned to death under the Old Covenant as a transgressor. This is what nearly happened to Mary the sinner. This is what happened to the thief on the cross. So we are not to look at the killings that took place under the Old Testament and the benefits that people got under the old testament and think that these are necessarily an indicator of the final destinies of people. Much of it was only illustration and type.

So when we look at the question of people's eternal destiny, we have to go beyond what we see based on the Old Testament. That's why Paul could say, "Rahab is saved," even though she was somebody most people wouldn't expect to see in heaven. When you look at the behaviour of some of these people it makes you want to ask, "what kind of people were these?" But God sees on a different level and we also have to learn to see on that level if we're going to understand God's purposes.

People who remain under the Old Covenant never change. It is only the outward behaviour which changes. Under it, they always remain bound to this earth and its ways. It is only when they have experienced Christ in the New Covenant that real change takes place and they truly become inheritors of eternal things.



Who Needed a Sacrifice

Continued from page 2

that he will not forgive them unless something is provided to appease his wrath, and that therefore he himself offers the gift to himself, by which he is appeased.”

What a crazy idea! But this is what billions of people, and even hundreds of millions of Christians believe.

Here is the theological definition that Webster gives, in his second definition of the word, “propitiation.” Webster was a protestant, and the thinking of Christendom is reflected in this definition.

Propitiation: *“In theology the atonement or atoning sacrifice offered to God to assuage His wrath and render Him propitious to sinners.”*

“Christ is the propitiation for the sins of men.” This is what Paul tells us, but how do Christians understand this? Looking at Webster’s definition we realize that they believe exactly what Waggoner said was crazy, that is, that God offered His own son to appease His own wrath. This is even worse than the pagan ideas. At least the pagans grabbed somebody else, but Christians say that God grabbed His own son! When I read this, I was flabbergasted. I told my whole family, “I can’t believe this.” But tragically, it is true and this confusion has been a major part of the problem affecting the way we relate to God and the plan of salvation.

Let us look again at what happened with Adam and Eve when they first sinned:

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (7) And the eyes of them both

were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. (8) And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. (Gen 3:6-8)

Now did God run away from them? Does it sound here like He is angry? Does He sound like somebody who needs to be appeased? Actually, it sounds here like He is very gentle, because He knows they are already running away from Him. What did God do to cause them to run from Him? God didn’t do anything did He? He didn’t do a single thing, but they were running away from Him! You see that’s what a sinful fallen nature does. It destroys the relationship with God! Even in human relationships, when we do something to hurt another person we damage the relationship with that person, and sinful nature has the tendency to run away when relationships are damaged.

Adam and Eve ran away, and not only did they run away, but they added to the problem as we see in verse 12:

And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. (13) And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. (Gen 3:12-13)

They blamed it on God! But what had God done to harm them? Did He come to have His wrath appeased? God came and spoke to them gently and immediately set out a plan in which He would do everything He possibly could to try to get them to come back to Him. He certainly did not make provision to have His wrath appeased!

Do you see what we have done? Do

you see the problem with our natures? It is often a struggle for any of us to come back to God because of that nature, but thanks be to God He has shown us His love and it is a mighty power to draw us to Him. When somebody loves you, you put your guard down and you are willing to get close to that person.

The reality of life is that until we trust a person, we will never put our guard down. We will always have a degree of reservation. That’s what our nature has done to us in our relationship with God. The simple truth is, it is not God who has left us, it is we who have left God and God has made propitiation to draw us home, to appease our wrath, to gain our trust, to gain our love!

So when you talk about sin, and the fact that God wants to give you victory, the question is can you trust Him? Can you believe Him? Will you believe somebody you can’t trust? It’s impossible.

You know, God forgave men from the very beginning, if not, He would not have instituted the plan of salvation. Do we understand what I mean by that? I am not saying we don’t need to confess our sins to God, but God could easily forgive us because that is how true love is.

Jesus paid the price for sin, totally and completely, for the whole world. When did He make that decision? He made that decision before we even did anything. That’s what Jesus was born for, the lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. But still, in the light of all this, we run away from God.

When we read the scriptures, we see that some of these Bible characters really knew God much better than many Christians today. Take David for example: When David numbered Israel, God told Him that there were three possible consequences which could happen as a result of his sin, and God told him to choose which of them he preferred. David’s answer shows us

that he truly understood the kind of person God is.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the LORD; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man. (1 Chr 21:13)

For the person who believes that God's wrath must be appeased, choosing to fall into the hands of the living God would be the most scary of all the possibilities which were available. But this was not so for David. David said, "forget falling into the hands of men, I would rather fall into the hands of a merciful and kind and just God." Of course there were consequences, but he made the right choice. He could do that because he trusted the One whom he had been following all those years.

Well what about the sacrifices given to the Jews? The sacrifices of the pagans were designed to appease the wrath of God, but were the sacrifices given to the Israelites different? Why did God ordain so many sacrifices to be offered by ancient Israel? These sacrifices were often abused and misunderstood, but the truth is that the sacrifices given to Israel were no different from the ones which were given to Adam and his descendants in Eden. They were to be a reminder of what God was going to do, not something that they had to do because of their sin, but a reminder of what God was going to do.

When God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, what was it that God told him? Abraham understood it completely because he was doing what God was going to do. This is why he told Isaac, "God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." From pagan circles it looked like Abraham was going to sacrifice his son to appease the wrath of God, but God was saying, "no, I'm going to offer my son to appease you, to let you know how much I love you, to restore the relationship between us."

In our married life we often take the attitude, "I'm not going to talk to her

because she did it; I'm not going to talk to him because he did it," but God said, "well I didn't do it but I'm still going to correct this relationship." And that's the way we need to be as Christians in our relationships.

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. (Heb 10:1)

So do we see what the real purpose of the law was? Do we see what all the sacrifices were intended to point to?

For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. (Heb 10:2)

In other words, if I, as an Israelite, by taking a sacrifice for sin for my family and offering that sacrifice could have corrected myself, made myself right, then I would never have had to offer a sacrifice again. But we know that they offered them year, after year, after year.

For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. (Heb 10:4)

But because of their connections with the pagans, that's what they began to believe. They came to believe that God's wrath needs to be appeased, so they brought the bulls by the thousands instead of just allowing God to give them righteousness. They felt they had to appease His wrath because they forgot the simple truth of what God is really like.

In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. (Heb 10:6)

I would like to conclude with Colossians 1:20,21:

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be

things in earth, or things in heaven. (21) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. (Col 1:20-21)

Our warped, sinful minds have always made us lean to the idea that God has not loved us, has been angry with us, that His wrath needs to be appeased. This is deeply rooted in "Christian" thinking today. This is so subtle that we often do not even recognize the underlying motivation for our actions. Do you realize that every time we try to do good things in order to please God, we are offering a sacrifice to appease His wrath? We are doing it in order to earn our salvation, that's what we are doing. We try to be good so that God will accept us.

This distorted thinking finally plays itself out in the most bizarre way of all. In the end of time God's people are going to be hunted down like animals as we already know. Do you know why this will happen? Jesus says they will persecute you "because they think they are doing God's service." they are going to kill you because they believe God is angry at them, and in order to appease His wrath, you must be destroyed. Is that not so? **You are the sacrifice they will offer to pacify God's anger!** The plagues are going to be falling all around and in that case there will be wrath, wrath against sin, and when there's wrath against sin, there will be a consequence against sinners. In their desperation and pitiful ignorance those who have never taken the time to know God will make an all-out effort to gain His approval and favour, by offering Him a sacrifice. A sacrifice of their fellow men, you and me. They feel that this is the only way to appease His wrath and obtain not only relief from suffering, but ultimately, salvation.

But in this final crisis, God's truth does not change. It remains the same as it has always been. God says, "no, I was never angry at you. You were angry at me."



Life in the Spirit

E.J. Waggoner

“Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.” Romans 6:6-7. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20. This is the experience of every true child of God. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature.” 2 Corinthians 5:17. He still lives in the flesh, to all outward appearance the same as other men; yet he is in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Romans 8:9. He lives in the flesh a life that is not of the flesh, and the flesh has no power over him. But so far as its works are concerned, he is dead. “The body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” Romans 8:10.

Is there any doubt here as to whether Paul believed Christians live in the Spirit? Not the slightest! No doubt is even implied! Because we live in the Spirit, we are in duty bound to submit to the Spirit. Only by the Spirit’s power, the same Spirit that in the beginning hovered over the face of the deep and brought order out of chaos, can any person live. “The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.” Job 33:4. By the same breath were the heavens made. Psalm 33:6. The Spirit of God is the life of the universe. The Spirit is the universal presence of God, in whom “we live and move and have our being.” Acts 17:28. We are dependent on the Spirit for life; therefore we should walk according to, or be guided by, the Spirit. This is our “reasonable service.”

What a wondrous life is here set forth! To live in the flesh as though the flesh were spirit. “There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” “Howbeit that was not first which is spiri-

tual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.” 1 Corinthians 15:44, 46. The natural body we now have. The spiritual body all the true followers of Christ will receive at the resurrection. See 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 50-53. Yet in this life, in the natural body, men are to be spiritual—to live just as they will in the future spiritual body. “You are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you.” Romans 8:9.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” John 3:6. By our natural birth we inherit all the evils enumerated in this fifth chapter of Galatians, “and the like.” We are fleshly. Corruption rules in us. By the new birth we inherit the fullness of God, being made “partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4. “The old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” (Ephesians 4:22), is crucified, or put off, “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” Romans 6:6.

Abiding in the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, the flesh with its lusts has no more power over us than if we were actually dead and in our graves. It is, then, the Spirit of God alone that animates the body. The Spirit uses the flesh as an instrument of righteousness. The flesh is still corruptible, still full of lusts, still ready to rebel against the

Spirit; but as long as we yield our wills to God, the Spirit holds the flesh in check. If we waver, if we in our hearts turn back to Egypt, or if we become self-confident and so relax our dependence on the Spirit, then we build again the things that we destroyed, and make ourselves transgressors. See Galatians 2:18. But this need not be. Christ has “power over all flesh,” and He has demonstrated His ability to live a spiritual life in human flesh.

This is the word made flesh. God manifest in the flesh. It is the revelation of “the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” Ephesians 3:19. With this Spirit of love and meekness ruling us, we will not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. All things will be of God, and this will be acknowledged so that none will have any disposition to boast over another.

This Spirit of life in Christ—the life of Christ—is given freely to all. “Whoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Revelation 22:17. “For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” 1 John 1:2. “Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift!” 2 Corinthians 9:15.

(EJ Waggoner - The Spirit Makes it Easy to be Saved, pages 121-123)

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Restoration Ministries
P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.

call: (304) 932-4543; (876) 603-0821
email: info@restorationministry.com; davidjam@cwjamaica.com

The Man That Died for Me

The following account is from a little tract which I found in my collection. I am not sure who wrote it but I think you will find the story a blessing.

Many years ago I wanted to go as a foreign missionary, but my way seemed hedged about and I went to live on the Pacific coast, in California, in the mining country of that district, where life is so rough. I resided with my husband and little boys. One day I heard of a man who lived over the hills, who was dying of consumption, and they said: "He is so vile no one can stand it to stay with him, so the men place some food near him and leave him for twenty-four hours." And my informant added, "They'll find him dead some time, and the quicker the better. Never had a soul, I guess."

The pity of it all haunted me as I went about my work and tried for several days to get someone to go to see him and find out if he was in need of better care. As I turned from the last man, vexed with his indifference, the thought came to me, "Why don't you go yourself? Here's missionary work, if you want it."

At last I went over the hills to the little mud cabin of one room. The door stood open, and in a corner, on some straw and colored blankets, I found the dying man. Sin had left awful marks on his face and, if I had not heard that he could not move, I should have retreated. As my shadow fell over the floor, he looked I and greeted me with a dreadful oath. I stepped forward a little, and there came another oath, "Don't speak so, my friend," I said. "I ain't your friend. I ain't got any friends," he said. "Well, I am yours, and—" but the oaths came thickly, as he said: "You ain't my friend, I never had any friends and I don't want any."

I reached out at arm's length the fruit I had brought him, and stepping back to the doorway, I asked him if he re-

membered his mother, hoping to find a tender place in his heart; but he cursed her. I asked him if he ever had a wife, and he cursed her. I spoke of God, and he cursed Him. I tried to speak of Jesus and his death for us but he stopped me with his oaths and said: "That's all a lie. Nobody ever died for others."

I went away discouraged but the next day I went back again—and then every day for two weeks, but he did not show the gratitude of a dog. At the end of that time I said: "I am not going any more." That night when I was putting my little boys to bed, we did not pray for the miner as we had been accustomed to do. My little Charlie noticed and said: "Mamma, we did not pray for the bad man." "No," I answered with a sigh, "Have you given him up, Mamma?" "Yes, I guess so." "Has God given him up, Mamma? ought we to give him up till God does?"

That night I could not sleep. That man dying and so vile and no one to care. I got up and went away by myself to pray, but the moment I touched my knees I was overpowered by the sense of how little meaning there had been to my prayers. I had had no real faith and I had not really cared beyond a kind of half-hearted sentiment. I had not claimed this soul for God. Oh, the shame, the shame of my missionary zeal! I fell on my face literally, as I cried: "Oh, Christ, give me a glimpse of the worth of a human soul!"

The next morning I left my work and hurried over the hills, not to see "that vile wretch," but to win a soul. As I passed on, a neighbor came out of her cabin, and said: "I'll go over the hills with you, I guess." I did not want her, and tried to dissuade her from coming, but she curtly remarked, "I'm going with you, I guess." It was to be another lesson for me: for God could plan better than I. She had her little girl with her, and as we reached the cabin, she said: "I'll wait out here, and you hurry, won't you?"

While I was changing the basin of water and towel for him, things which I had done every day, and which he had used, but never thanked me for, the clear laugh of the little girl rang out upon the air like a bird note. "What's that?" said the man eagerly.

"It's a little girl outside who is waiting for me."

"Would you mind letting her come in?" said he in a different tone from any I had heard before.

Stepping to the door, I beckoned to her, and then taking her by the hand, said, "come in and see the sick man, Mamie." She shrank back as she saw his face, saying, "I'm 'fraid," but I assured her with, "Poor sick man, he can't get up, he wants to see you."

She looked like an angel; her bright face framed in golden curls, and her eyes tender and pitiful. In her hand she held the flowers she had picked off the purple sage, and bending toward him, she said: "I sorry for'ou, sick man. Will 'ou have a posy?"

He laid his great bony hand beyond the flowers on the plump hand of the child, and the great tears came to his eyes, as he said: "I had a little girl once, and she died. Her name was Mamie. She cared for me, nobody else did. Guess I'd been different if she'd lived. I've hated everybody since she died."

I could have shouted with joy, because I instantly realized that the long lost key to the man's heart had been found and entrusted to my care. What a blessed story I had to tell that hour, and I had been so close to Calvary that night that I could tell it in earnest! The poor face grew pale as I talked, and the man threw up his arms as though his agony was mastering him. Two or three times he gasped as though losing breath. Then, clutching me he said: "What's that, woman, you said t'other day 'bout talking to somebody out o' sight?"

“It’s praying. I tell God what I want.”
“Pray now, pray quick! Tell Him I want my little gal again. Tell him anything you want to!”

I took the hands of the child and placed them on the trembling hands of the man. Then dropping on my knees with the child in front of me, I bade her pay for the man who had lost his Mamie and wanted to see her again. This was Mamie’s prayer:

“Dear Jesus, this man is sick. He has lost his little girl and he feels bad about it. I’se so sorry for him, and he’s so sorry, too. Won’t you help him, and show him where to find his little girl? Do, please, amen.”

Heaven seemed to open before us. There stood One with the print of the nails in His hand and the wound in His side.

Mamie slipped away soon but the man

kept saying, “Tell Him more ‘bout it; tell Him everything but oh! You don’t know.” Then he poured out such a torrent of confession that I could not have borne it but for One who was close to us in that hour.

By and by the sick man grasped the STRONG HANDS. It was the third day when the poor, tired soul turned from everything to him the Mighty to save, to the One Whom he spoke of as, “the man that died for me.”

He lived on for weeks, as if God would show how real was the change. One morning the door was closed and I found two men sitting silently by on a board stretched across two stools. They turned back the sheet from the dead, and I looked on the face, which seemed to have come back nearer to the “image of God.”

“I wish you could have seen him when

he went,” they said. “Do tell me about it,” I replied. “Well, all at once he brightened up ‘bout midnight, and smilin’ said, ‘I’m goin’ boys. Tell her I’m goin’ to see the man that died for me,’ and he was gone.”

Kneeling there, with my hands over those poor, cold ones, that had been stained with human blood, I asked God to let me understand more and more THE WORTH OF A HUMAN SOUL.

“Thus saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow : though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Isa. 1:18.

Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ-we have peace with God.(1 Peter 1:19; Rom. 5:1).



Open Face

*Restoration Ministries
P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.
ph. (304) 932-4543
Jamaica: (876) 603-0821*