

The Atonement (Romans 3:23-26)

I. Cause of the Atonement

- A. We may define atonement as follows: The atonement is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.
 1. The word atonement is most commonly used to specifically talk about the work on the cross, which is Jesus dying and paying the cost of our sins, but we must also note the saving works that Christ did while alive.
- B. The fundamental question, is Why did Jesus have to come down from heaven to die on the cross?
 1. Scripture shows us two reasons which happen to be also two characteristics of God.
 - #1 The Love of God, We see this in the most familiar passage in the Bible. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, for whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - #2 The Justice of God , The Justice of God required that God find a way that the penalty for our sins was paid for.
 - As a just God he could not accept us into fellowship without the penalty being paid first.
 - In [Romans 3:25](#) Paul explains it “[Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in his blood through his faith. This was to demonstrate His Righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.](#)” / Christ was sent to be a propitiation
 - Propitiation= the act of which reparation and reconciliation is made
 - In other words it is the sacrifice that bears God’s wrath, so that we may be “propitious” or reconciled with God.
 - We learn that the blood of Jesus satisfied the wrath of God
 - Forbearance= a refraining from something/ self-control
 - With this act of forbearance we learn that God had overlooked former sin, and Paul explains that more than overlooking sin God looked forward to the cross of Christ, where the full payment for the guilt of sin would be made. We learn in [Hebrews 10:4](#) “[For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin.](#)”

- These animal sacrifices SYMBOLIZED the payment for sin, but they did not accomplish it.
 - No animal was worthy of paying the price for human sin before the Holy God.
 - Now understand that the law assumes that atonement and forgiveness occur by means of sacrifice, HOWEVER last years sacrifice does not cover this years sin. Thus leaving still a sinful condition.
 - God needed a perement payment of sin to permanently deal with sin
 - As a just God and King, there could be no forgiveness of sins without payment of penalty.
 - This is why Paul explains in [Romans 3:26](#), “It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that HE MAY BE JUST and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
 - At the Cross, God Showed himself to be Just(by the penalty demanded by the law was not abolished, but fulfilled/ [Matthew 5:17](#)) but, he also showed himself to be the justifier, The one who provides the mean for justification, and who declares people to be in right standing with him, and salvation to those who have faith in Jesus.
 - This is the heart of the Christian faith explained in [Romans 3:25-26](#) That at the cross both the Justice of God and Love of God meet.
 - Therefore both Love and Justice of God were the ultimate cause of the atonement.
 - Both are Extremely important
 - Without the Love of God he would never have taken the steps to redeem us
 - Without the Justice of God, The specific requirement that Christ should earn our salvation by dying for our sins would have not been meet.
 - If we only focus on the Love of God, we fail to justice to the righteousness of God, and we reduce the sufferings and death of Christ to an unexplained mystery
 - If we only focus on the Justice of God, we fail to do Justice to the Love of God, and make it so that God only cared about his honor through it all.
 - There is no atonement without Justice and there is no atonement without love.
2. What Should this produce in us ?
- Understanding the Justice of God brings us into a place were we are able to trust him more, let go of our life by understanding that he does everything right he is Just , He is righteous, He is Holy.
 - Understanding His love for us should produce a heart of both gratitude and praise. Knowing that the King of Kings put a plan in motion so that we can be

reconciled with him, so that we may be able to spend eternity with him, but also live on communion with God himself.

II. The Necessity of the Atonement

A. The fundamental question: Was there any other way God could have saved human beings without sending his son to die ?

1. Before answer that we must understand that God didn't have to save us at all.

- We appreciate his saving grace towards humanity when we read in [2 Peter 2:4](#) “God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into Hell, and committed them to chains of gloomy darkness to be kept until judgment”
- How he wiped out the ancient world, but only preserved Noah and his family
- How he wiped out sodom and Gomorrah to ashes and Made an example to what happens to the ungodly
- Then we also realize how God could have also chosen in his perfect justice to have left us in our sins awaiting our judgment.
- We are told repeatedly that he by no means would clear the guilty
 - [Exodus 34:7](#) “Keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty.
 - [Numbers 14:18](#) “The Lord is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty.”
 - [Nahum 1:3](#) “The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, but the Lord will by no means clear the guilty.”
- We observe how God hates sin, in fact his whole being reacts against it.
 - [Psalms 5:4-6](#) “You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors the blood thirsty and deceitful man.”
 - [Nahum 1:2](#) “The Lord is a jealous and avenging God; the Lord is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies.
 - [Romans 1:18](#) “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness surprise the truth.

2. When God decides that in his Love he would save us, we understand through scripture that there was no other way, but through the blood of Jesus.

- In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus Prays this; [Matthew 26:39](#) “And going a little further he fell on his face and prayed, saying “My Father, If it is possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I Will but as YOU WILL”
- The “Cup” is biblically symbolic for ones destiny

- Blessing/ Psalms 16:5 “The lord is my chosen portion and my cup”
- Salvation/ Psalms 116:13 “I will lift up the cup of Salvation and call on the name of the Lord”
- Wrath & Destruction / Jeremiah 25:15 “Thus says the Lord, the God Of Israel, said to me: “Take from my hand this cup of the wine of Wrath, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. Isaiah 51:17 “Wake yourself, Wake yourself, stand up, O Jerusalem, you who have drunk from the hand of the Lord the cup of his wrath.
- We understand here he is speaking on the Cup of suffering which he foretold in Matthew 20:22-23
- We have the assurance that Jesus always prayed according to the will of the father, and full of faith, showing us through this prayer that it was not possible for Jesus to avoid death on the cross
- Galatians 1:4 affirms this was the will of the Father “Who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”
- if Jesus were to accomplish the will of the father, the reason for the word becoming flesh, and if people were going to be redeemed to God, it was necessary for Jesus to die.
- We see that God’s will at the end was for Jesus to die and endure the cup of suffering which was to bear the sins of the world
- While Jesus encounters two disciples on the road to Emmaus, who were sad about the Death of Jesus, Jesus himself tells us that it is necessary Luke 24:25-26 “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not NECESSARY that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his Glory?”
- Jesus understood the Father redemption plan that (which he explained to the disciples from many old testament scriptures.) made it necessary for the messiah to die for the sins of his people
- The Epistle to the Hebrews the author emphasized that Christ had to suffer for our sins.
- Hebrews 2:17 “He had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he may become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”
- Because we learned that the blood of bulls and goats do not take away sin (Hebrews 10:4) A better sacrifice is required.

- Hebrews 9:23 “ Thus it was necessary for the copy of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavy things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”
 - The need for purification requires a sacrifice
 - The lesser things, (like the mosaic tabernacle) are patterned after the greater heavenly realities. Which represent the very presence of God
 - Now in order for the reality of Heaven to become a reality on earth there had to be a greater purification Sacrifice so that it may no longer be a copy but the real thing. This sacrifice was the precious blood of Jesus.
- Only the blood of Christ, that is his death , would be really able to take away sins
 - Hebrews 9:25-26 “ Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy places every year with BLOOD NOT HIS OWN, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once and for all at the end of the ages to put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself.”
- Therefore we see that there was no other way for God to save us than for Christ to die in our place.