

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Understanding the Substitutionary Atonement**

**Understanding the Substitutionary Atonement, on: 2007/10/29 7:50**

**1. THE EXAMPLE OF THE SCAPE GOAT:** Lev 16:9-10

In this illustration the scape goat would bare the sin of the people away into the wilderness.

**Because the scape goat would bare the sins of the people many assumptions have been made. But the text does NOT allow for the assumptions that:**

- punishment was transferred: the goat did not go to hell.
- moral guilty was transferred: the goat was not a moral agent and guilt cannot be transferred. Guilty has to do with personal actions. Nowhere does the text say that the goat was guilty of anything.
- moral character or moral identity was transferred: Moral character cannot be transferred but can only be developed. Character is not a commodity that can be bought and sold, transferred or inherited.

The goat did not become a sinner neither did the priest become a goat. God did not see the goat as a sinner but rather as a goat. And God did not see the priest as a goat but rather as a priest.

Sin was represented but punishment, guilt, and character was not transferred.

**What does the scape goat illustrate:**

- an atonement is made on behalf of sins: the purpose of the atonement is that it is done for sins. Sacrifices are done for the sins of the people. The scape goat ceremony was for the sins of the people.
- an atonement substitutes our punishment: an atonement is always an alternative to punishment, which makes it possible for God not to execute the punishment. The scape goat was an alternative (substitute) to the peoples punishment.
- an atonement bares away sins (takes away sins). The effect of the atonement is to lead sinners to repentance. The atonement is to take away the actual sins of the people.

The scape goat would bare away the sins of the people, **symbolically** showing how an atonement takes away both the punishment of sin and also the actual sins.

**JESUS CHRIST:** is our scape goat. He, symbolically and not literally, bore our sins on the tree. That means that Christ died on behalf of our sins (sin offering) so that the sins don't have to be punished and Christ takes away our sins by leading us into repentance.

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**2. THE EXAMPLE OF THE PASSOVER LAMB:** Exodus 12:21-23

In this story, a lambs blood was to be put on the door of the house for the plague to passover instead of being poured out.

**It must be noticed that**

- the passover lamb did not receive the plague instead of the Israelites
- the passover lamb did not become guilty of anything

- the passover lamb did not become a sinner
- the Israelites did not change identities with the lamb

**The passover lamb:**

- Was an *alternative* (or substituted) to the plague sent by God.
- Made it possible for the plague to passover instead of poured out.

**JESUS CHRIST:** is our passover lamb (1Cor 5:7). He did not receive the plague (wrath) but makes it possible for the plague (wrath) to "passover" instead of being poured out.

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**3. THE EXAMPLE OF THE SERPENT IN THE DESERT:** Numbers 21:6-8

As a punishment for sins, God sent serpents to bite the Israelites. To "take away the serpents from among us" Moses, as instructed by God, lifted up a serpent upon a pole so that all who look to it would be healed.

**It should be understood that**

- The serpent on the pole was not bitten by the other serpents
- The Israelites did not exchange identities with the serpent on the pole
- The serpent on the pole did not become guilty of any sin
- The serpent on the pole did not become a sinner

**The serpent on the pole:**

- Made it possible for the Israelites to be healed (forgiven: escape further punishment). All they had to do with to look to the Serpent on the pole and they would cease from being bitten and would be healed of their wounds.

**JESUS CHRIST:** is the serpent in the wilderness (Jn 3:14). Jesus makes it possible for us to be healed, that is, forgiven of our sins so that our sins are not punished. If we will but look to Jesus, we will be saved from wrath and our sins will be forgiven.

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**4. THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ANY ATONEMENT:**

There are other accomplishments of an atonement but these are the major ones: Righteousness imparted and righteousness imputed:

- **FORGIVENESS:** (Righteousness imputed) Without blood shed there is no forgiveness of sins (Heb 9:11). That means that without an atonement, punishment must be executed. But with an atonement, punishment can be set aside, sins can be forgiven instead of punished.

Romans 3:24-26 says that the blood atonement makes it possible for God to graciously forgive our sins (instead of punish them) and that the blood atonement makes it **JUST** for God to do so, since justice requires either atonement or punishment.

- **REPENTANCE:** (Righteousness imparted) The Lamb of God takes away our sin (John 1:29) His blood cleanses us from all sin (1John 1:7, 1John 3:5). The effect of the atonement is to bring the sinner to repentance, to cleanse him from all sin, to purify and purge him.

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**5. ATONEMENT INSTEAD OF PUNISHMENT:**

The scriptures represent an atonement as an alternative to punishment, or as a substituted for punishment, which make s it possible for God to forgive instead of punish.

**AN EXAMPLE:** would be in Numbers 16:46-48. In this story, wrath was being poured out upon the Israelites. But when Aaron made an atonement for sins, the wrath was "stayed" instead of poured out.

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**6. FORGIVENESS OF SINS INSTEAD OF PUNISHMENT OF SINS:**

**It should be understood that:**

- Sins that are punished are not sins that are forgiven.
- Sins that are forgiven are not sins that are punished.

**The bible says:**

- that God actually forgives sins: Mat 9:6, Mark 2:7, Mark 2:10, Luke 5:21, Luke 5:24, Luke 11:4, 1John 1:9.
- that the atonement makes it possible for God to forgive (remission) sins: Mat 26:28, Luke 24:47, Acts 2:38, Acts 10:43, Heb 10:18)

Because of the atonement of Christ, God can actually forgive our sins instead of punish our sins, God can actually be ju st in setting aside our punishment.

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**7. PARDON OF DEBT INSTEAD OF PAYMENT OF DEBT:**

**It should be understood that:**

- A debt paid is not a debt pardoned
- A debt pardoned is not a debt paid
- Pardon and forgiveness are synonymous
- Payment and punishment are synonymous

**The bible says:**

- God actually pardons the debt: Mat 6:12, Matt 18:27, Luke 7:42.

These are examples of unpaid debts being forgiven. Only unpaid debts can be forgiven, since paid debts are not forgive n but paid.

Matthew 18 particularly makes payment and pardon an antithesis.

God can only pardon our debts, when an atonement is made. An atonement is a substituted for our payment. An atonem ent is the price of blood to substituted for the payment or penalty of hell.