

Atonement and the Cross of Christ Lesson 11 4Q 2008

Benefits of Christ's Atoning Sacrifice

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph "The doctrinal significance..." – thoughts?
Any problems with this?

- What about the idea that without the resurrection of Christ there is no forgiveness?
- What is the underlying premise that contributes to this idea? That forgiveness equals salvation.
- Is it possible to be forgiven and not saved?
- Does God ever remain unforgiving?
- Will God have an unforgiving heart, hold a grudge for all eternity against those who refuse salvation?
- Can God forgive and people still be lost?
- Was God precluded from being forgiving or extending forgiveness without the death and resurrection of Jesus?

Bottom of Monday's lesson states, "Have you sinned, even after you've accepted Jesus as your Savior? If so, what comfort do you get from knowing that Christ is mediating God's forgiveness on your behalf in heaven?" – thoughts?

- Who would Christ be mediating God's forgiveness in your behalf in heaven to?
- If God is forgiving then is there a need for Christ to be mediating that forgiveness in heaven to the Father?
- Who needs the forgiveness of God "mediated" to them? Would it not be us?
- Romans 2:4 God's kindness leads us to repentance
- Romans 5:8 While we were still sinners Christ died for us

Miriam was arguing with Moses over who should lead the people (Numbers 4) and God struck Miriam with leprosy.

- What does leprosy symbolize? Sin, as long as Miriam had leprosy she could not go back into the camp of Israel.
- Could God have forgiven Miriam and yet she still have leprosy?
- In other words, could God extend forgiveness to Miriam yet she still not be healed?
- Would she be able to go back into the camp? No, not until the leprosy is gone and she is “cleansed.”
- Likewise, God can forgive sinners but forgiveness extended from God is not the same as healing the sinner, cleansing the sinner, recreating the sinner. We can't go to heaven with sinful hearts and minds, we must be renewed, reborn, recreated, regenerated, healed to be like Jesus. Jesus came to do this!

Back to Sunday's lesson, God forgives because God is forgiving. Christ did not come to earth to achieve forgiveness from God; He came to minister the forgiveness of God!

Read 1 Cor 15:16-18

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 1COR 15:16-18

- Does this text say anything about our forgiveness being dependent on Christ's resurrection? No! It does say something about our salvation being dependent upon it.

Read second paragraph, “The death of Christ...” thoughts?

- Why would the death of Christ have no atoning power without His resurrection?
- What do the lesson authors mean by “atoning power”?
- If atoning means expiation, paying of legal debt and our legal debt is eternal death, then in order to pay that debt and “atone” us wouldn't Christ need to stay dead? Or

another way to ask the question: Wouldn't we be more secure that our "legal debt" was paid if Christ was still dead – His life paid for our, but since He rose again whose life has paid for ours?

- What do you understand atoning to be?

The resurrection of Christ is the inevitable consequence to the law of love destroying the law of sin and death in Christ's victorious life! (Heb 2:14, 2Tim:1:,9,10). Just as recovery and health is the inevitable result of curing a disease, life is the result of Christ's victory over sin! His resurrection is the proof that He won, that He destroyed sin and death and that the remedy He achieved works to cure sinners and thus we are assured that the first death has no power over those who trust Jesus!

Read last paragraph "Jesus took to heaven..." thoughts?

- It says "Christ removed the barrier of sin", where was this barrier?
- What was preventing God's love from flowing to His people without Christ?
- Was God restricting the outpouring of His love until Christ or without Christ, or was God's love obstructed from flowing into the hearts of mankind without Christ? Why?

MONDAY

As we talk about the "mediation" of Christ here is a list of sentences from this week's lesson:

- Monday
 - The death and resurrection of Christ make possible the mediation of Christ **before the Father**
 - That makes the role of our Mediator **before the Father** an indispensable element in the plan of salvation.

- In the Bible the mediation of Christ **before the Father** is never separated from His atoning sacrifice.
- John says we have an advocate who can represent us **before God** and through whom we can be forgiven.
- Wednesday
 - Earth probably would be as desolate as Mars if not for the Cross of Christ and for Christ's mediation **before the Father**.
- Friday
 - The Saviour presents the virtue of His mediation **before the Father**, and pledges Himself to the office of personal Intercessor.
 - If God loves us and sent His Son to die for us, why is it necessary for Jesus to function as a Mediator **before the Father**?

Thoughts about this phrase “before the Father” what does it mean? How do you hear it? How have you thought of this in the past?

The lesson suggests that John says we have someone who can represent us before God – let's look at that text 1John 2:1:

- My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have **one who speaks to the Father in our defense**--Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. NIV
- I am writing this to you, my children, so that you will not sin; but if anyone does sin, we have **someone who pleads with the Father on our behalf**—Jesus Christ, the righteous one. GNT
- My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, **we have an Advocate with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous; NASB

- My dear children, I write this letter to you so you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, **we have a helper in the presence of the Father**—Jesus Christ, the One who does what is right. NCV
- I write this, dear children, to guide you out of sin. But if anyone does sin, we have a Priest-**Friend in the presence of the Father**: Jesus Christ, righteous Jesus. Message
- My precious children, I am writing you so that you will realize the power of God’s love to free you from selfishness and therefore experience God’s healing and no longer live selfishly. But, if during the healing process, relapses into selfishness occur don’t be discouraged, Jesus Christ stands at the helm of all power, right next to God, and is pouring his love into our hearts to complete his restoring and healing work. Jennings paraphrase

Thoughts?

Is Jesus as our “mediator” somehow working on the Father to influence the Father to be kind, loving, forgiving, saving? No! All such ideas are pagan. How do we know?

- John 14:9 Anyone who has seen Christ has seen the Father, they are one
- John 16:26 Jesus said He would not pray the Father for us
- Romans 8:31-34 – If God is for us who can be against us...

Whatever mediation means it does not mean one member of the Godhead working on the other member of the Godhead to influence the other member to be gracious or loving toward us.

Read first paragraph Monday – “The death of Christ...” thoughts?

- Notice how the lesson attempts to shift the problem from mankind to God. Guilt and sin are part of the human experience “in the sight of God.” What is the implication of this sentence?
- Is it implying that we have a problem because our sin is in the sight of God, but fortunately Jesus is there to mitigate God’s response and “advocate” on our behalf?
- Why is sin and guilt in the “sight of God”? Because God sees reality as it is and we are still infected with sin and guilt.
- Imagine a doctor who has a patient with cancer and we say the deformity and devastation of cancer is seen by the doctor. Would we think, “Oh, I sure hope there is an advocate with the doctor to help us if He actually sees how sick we are”?
- If Christ is not “mediating” to the Father where is the focus of Christ’s mediation?
- Where does a doctor focus his interventions? In the patient! Christ is working, mediating in the sinner all His goodness, all His “merits”, all He has accomplished. He is working to heal us, to restore in us God’s law of love, to win us back to trust, to remove the lies and distortions about God from us. He is working to bring us back into unity, at-one-ment with the Father!

Read second paragraph – “In the Bible...” thoughts? Christ is the means through which God’s forgiveness is communicated and made real to us. We would not know the forgiveness of God except for Christ.

Read last paragraph – “It is perhaps...” thoughts?

Read Hebrews 2:17:

- Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. KJV
- Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. NASB
- This means that he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in his service to God, so that the people's sins would be forgiven. GNT
- For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. NIV
- For this reason Jesus had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way so he could be their merciful and faithful high priest in service to God. Then Jesus could die in their place to take away their sins. NCV
- That's why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people's sins, Message
- For this reason, he had to become one of them - completely human in every way, in order to purge humanity of selfishness, enlighten the darkened minds of men about God so they would trust him as the mediator of God's remedy and thus perfectly heal mankind back into unity with God in heart, mind and character. Jennings paraphrase

Thoughts? What is Christ doing in heaven? He is directing all the agencies of heaven to heal and restore you and me!

- “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. ¹³ But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. ¹⁴ He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will take from what is mine and make it known to you. John 16:12-15
- If the Holy Spirit is not speaking on His own, who is He speaking for?
- Who is the Holy Spirit listening to?
- He takes what is Christ’s and makes it known to us! Christ is in heaven and is pleading before the Father to you and me. The Holy Spirit communicates Christ’s pleadings to us. Those who respond and open the heart the Holy Spirit, at the direction of Christ, takes what Christ has achieved and reproduces it in us!
- He takes the truth about God as revealed by Christ and enlightens,
- He takes the purity of Christ and cleanses,
- He takes the love of Christ and empowers,
- He takes the mind of Christ makes wise,
- He takes the character of Christ and recreates,
- He takes the nature of Christ and restores to oneness with God.

Read pink section at bottom – thoughts?

- Would it not mean that we need to be comforted from fear of what God will do to us?
- That we have comfort knowing Jesus is in heaven pleading to His Father to obtain His forgiveness?

- In other words this theory has our problem being God and we are comforted knowing Jesus is there to protect us. But, not so, we are comforted to know Jesus has overcome sin and will perfectly heal all who trust Him!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph “If the death...” thoughts?

- Why could the resurrection not be separated from the death?
- His resurrection demonstrates He perfectly cured the sin condition, that He eradicated the infection which brings death, that He perfectly restored the basis of life into humanity.
- His resurrection was the natural consequence to His victory over sin, just as health is the natural consequence of eradicating disease!
- Therefore if He didn’t rise again it would mean He didn’t cure the condition and we have no remedy and thus are without hope of healing. But He did rise again which proves He cured the condition and His remedy will heal all who trust Him.

The lesson points us to the work of Christ in the “heavenly sanctuary” what do you understand that to be?

What Bible texts enlighten us about this concept?

- The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, ² and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man. Hebrews 8:1,2
- They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you

make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”^a Hebrews 8:5

Thoughts about this? Is the Bible teaching an idea that there is a sanctuary in heaven and that the OT one was modeled after it? Yes it does.

How do we understand the heavenly sanctuary?

God’s law is – the law of love, is this law a code or is it a living law?

- Can the law of love be understood on stone or only in intelligent living creatures?
- In the OT system where was the law kept? In the ark,
- In the NT where is the law? Written on the heart and mind –
- Does this give any insight into what the Heavenly Sanctuary is?

In the OT system the blood was taken throughout the system where did Jesus say the blood was to be taken? Into the believer: Unless we drink His blood we have no part with him (John 6:53,54). Does this give us any insight into what the Heavenly Sanctuary is?

- Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22
- For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” 2 Cor 6:16

^a Exodus 25:40

- Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? 1 Cor 3:16
- As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.”

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone,” 1 Pet 2:4-7

- "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. Malachi 3:1-4
- Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: `Here is the man whose name is the **Branch**, and he will branch out from his place and **build the temple** of the LORD. It is he who will **build the temple** of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' Zech 6:12,13

- If the Temple was already in existence in heaven then why is Christ going to build it?
 - What do we say the Bible teaches about the day of Atonement? Judgment? Cleansing from sin? Notice the next passage:
- Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?" Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you." Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by. The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: "This is what the LORD Almighty says: `If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here. " `Listen, O high priest Joshua and your associates seated before **you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch.** See, the **stone** I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,' says the LORD Almighty, `and I will **remove the sin of this land in a single day.** Zech 3:1-9
 - Who is the Branch? Christ and He comes to His temple, to do what? To cleanse it and who/what is being cleansed? The people!
 - What about the Hebrews text that the sanctuary in heaven is not build with human hands?

- Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, **not built by human hands**. 2Cor 5:1
- “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. John 14:1-3
 - In my Father’s “house” ??? Temple? Sanctuary? Is room for many???
- One day the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came with them. Job 1:6
- But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. Heb 12:22,23
- He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God’s temple, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:4

Do these passages give any insight as to what the heavenly sanctuary is? Where God dwells? What Christ is trying to cleanse?

Where does sin occur? In the hearts and minds of intelligent beings and Christ is mediating the truth and love of God to reinfuse it back into all His intelligent creatures who trust Him, in order to fulfill His mystery:

- And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven

and on earth together under one head, even Christ.
Ephesians 1:9,10

WEDNESDAY

Second paragraph states, “Although sinners deserve death, their natural life is preserved through God’s grace, all made possible only through the Cross.” – thoughts? What does this mean?

- Why do sinners deserve death?
- Why does a man who jumps off the Empire State building deserve death?
- Why does a person who ties weights on their legs and jumps in the ocean deserve death?
- Why does a child born with HIV deserve death? Is it the child’s fault?
- Is it our fault as individuals that we are born in a terminal state?
- Why does a person with a terminal condition who refuses a remedy deserve death?
- Why do we deserve death?

Why is life possible only through the Cross?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph “In order to...” thoughts? Is God’s grace different? Are there two types of grace coming from God? Or is it that God’s grace is always healing, always redemptive, always restoring the only difference is in the response of the recipients of His grace?

Read second paragraph “Jesus said...” thoughts? Why does the Cross become ineffective without the work of the Holy Spirit?

First, because without the HS our minds could not rightly comprehend what Christ accomplished so we wouldn’t trust

and second, because it is the HS who takes what Christ has achieved and makes it effectual in our lives!

FRIDAY

Second paragraph – thoughts?

- Where does the Spirit dwell?
- Where does sin occur?
- What is Jesus working to cleanse from sin?
- Who is Jesus agent in accomplishing this cleansing work?
- Is intercession related to working in the hearts and minds (the Spirit Temple) to cleanse from sin?
- What happens when a person hardens their heart to the point they have completely shut out the Holy Spirit?
- What happens when more and more people in the world do this?