

Atonement and the Cross of Christ Lesson 8 4Q 2008

Born of a Woman: Atonement and the Incarnation

Read Memory Verse 1 John 3:5 – thoughts?

Take away sin from where? Where do the sins go? Did Jesus come to take away our acts of sin or did He come to take away sinfulness? If it is acts how can He do that? Does history get erased?

When David committed adultery with Bathsheba and she got pregnant and then he murdered Uriah did David afterward repent? Were his sins “taken away” by Jesus? Does that mean that Bathsheba wasn’t pregnant nor was Uriah murdered?

Or was it true that even after David repented, even after he experienced forgiveness and reconciliation with God that Uriah was still dead and Bathsheba pregnant? Where was the sin taken away from if not from history?

Christ came to take sin, sinfulness out of our hearts, our minds and our characters. Christ came to remove evil, guilt, shame, fear, selfishness and sinfulness from the heart, mind character of mankind! He came to cure the race from sinfulness and thus return us to full unity and harmony with God!

Read the paragraph on the first page of the lesson “Scientists concede...” thoughts?

What do you think about the idea that without the incarnation there would not be reconciliation with God? Absolutely true! We will explore why in a minute, but what about the idea that without the incarnation there would not be forgiveness of sin?

What do you understand forgiveness to mean? Is forgiveness something that the offended extends from his or her heart? If

we understand forgiveness in this way which came first God's forgiveness or Christ's incarnation?

In the OT did people experience forgiveness? Was this forgiveness genuine or was it conditional on Christ coming and dying? If Christ didn't come and die would God have been unforgiving? Did Christ's death change God from unforgiving to forgiving? Or was God always forgiving and Christ's death was the means necessary to bring more than forgiveness but to bring healing and restoration?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph "The coming of Jesus..." – thoughts?

What do you understand the nature of Christ to be? What views have you heard on this topic?

What is the evidence of Scripture?

- How did Adam and Eve enter the world? What was their condition? (created from dust by God perfect)
- How did we enter the world? What is our condition? (born of sinful mother and father)
- How did Jesus enter the world? (born of sinful mother but Holy Spirit is Father)

Jesus is unique in all creation history – what significance does this have for us? Why is this important?

Read third paragraph "The point is that..." thoughts? We all agree Jesus was fully God, yes? Did Jesus on earth ever use His own personal divine abilities? How do we know?

- Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. John 5:19
- By myself I can do nothing; John 5:30

- So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. John 8:28

Was Jesus tempted to use His power in self interest? What do we learn about Jesus? What do we learn about God?

Some teach that Jesus came with only the character of God but without any access to the divine attributes of God, what is the problem with such a position? What do we not learn? What question remains unanswered about God's character if this is true? How God wields power!

If Christ didn't have access to divine power then we don't know if He would have used it selfishly, we don't know what God would do when His creatures torture Him. You have heard the saying power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, well if Jesus didn't have divine power this statement remains unrefuted in God.

But praise God, Jesus was fully God and in Him we see not only the divine character of love fully displayed we also see how God uses power and that Christ and God are completely safe with all power because Christ has demonstrated He will never use it selfishly even when His own life is on the line!

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. John 13:3-5

MONDAY

The last sentence of the first paragraph states, “The reality of the union of the human and the divine in Christ is indispensable for the atonement.”

The second paragraph then asks: “Why?..” someone read the second paragraph – thoughts?

Why was this union necessary? What did Christ come to accomplish?

TQ page 93 states, “It was the only possible plan that would demonstrate the truth character of God and at the same time save humanity.”

What was demonstrated by Christ’s life, death and resurrection?

- God’s character
- Christ’s character (Philippians 2)
- The nature of sin
- How God treats the wicked
- Exposing of Satan
- God’s use of power (unselfish)
- No defect in God’s design of humanity
- The perfection of God’s law of love

What was accomplished or achieved, in addition to revelation of truth, by Christ’s life, death and resurrection?

- Destruction of Satan (Hebrews 2:14)
- Destruction of death (2Tim 1:9,10)
- Perfect character by a human being Jesus (Heb 4:15, James 1:11, Heb 5:8)
- Curing the sinful condition when love overcame selfishness in Jesus Christ

TQ page 93 states, "Ask your class to think of everyday things that they cannot explain and that they accept by faith. How does this make them feel?"

Does the fact you cannot explain something mean you accept it by faith? If you can explain something is your acceptance of it no longer on faith?

There is a type of "faith" that is not faith at all but presumption and this presumption is a faith for which we cannot give explanation, a faith which has no evidence, a faith that says just believe.

Friday, Oct. 03, 2008

Foreclosures: Did God Want You to Get That Mortgage?

By David Van Biema

Has the so-called [Prosperity Gospel](#) turned its followers into some of the most willing participants — and hence, victims — of the current financial crisis? That's what a scholar of the fast-growing brand of pentecostal Christianity believes. While researching a book on black televangelism, says Jonathan Walton, a religion professor at the University of California Riverside, he realized that Prosperity's central promise — that God would "make a way" for poor people to enjoy the better things in life — had developed an additional, toxic expression during sub-prime boom. Walton says that this encouraged congregants who got dicey mortgages to believe "God caused the bank to ignore my credit score and blessed me with my first house." The results, he says, "were disastrous, because they pretty much turned parishioners into prey for greedy brokers."

Others think he may be right. Says Anthea Butler, an expert in pentecostalism at the University of Rochester in New York state, "The pastor's not gonna say 'go down to [Wachovia](#) and get a loan' but I have heard, 'even if you have a poor credit rating God can still bless you — if you put some faith out there [that is, make a big donation to the church], you'll get that house, or that car or that apartment.'" Adds J. Lee Grady, editor of the magazine *Charisma*, "It definitely goes on, that a preacher might say, 'If you give this offering, God will give you a house. And if they did get the house, people did think that it was an answer to prayer, when in fact it was really bad banking policy.' If so, the situation offers a look at how an native-born faith built partially on American econoic optimism entered into a toxic symbiosis with a pathological market."

Although a type of Pentecostalism, Prosperity theology adds a distinctive layer of supernatural positive thinking. Adherents will reap rewards if they prove their faith to God by contributing heavily to their churches, remaining mentally and verbally upbeat, and

concentrating on divine promises of worldly bounty supposedly strewn throughout the bible. Critics call it a thinly disguised pastor-enrichment scam. Other experts, like Walton, note that for all its faults, it can empower people who have been taught to see themselves as financially or even culturally useless to feel they are "worthy of having more and doing more and being more." In some cases the philosophy has matured with its practitioners, encouraging good financial habits and entrepreneurship.

But Walton suggests that a decade's worth of ever-easier credit acted like drug in Prosperity's bloodstream. "The economic boom 90's and financial over-extensions of the new millennium contributed to the success of the prosperity message," he wrote recently. And not positively. "Narratives of how 'God blessed me with my first house despite my credit' were common. Sermons declaring 'it's your season to overflow' supplanted messages of economic sobriety," and "little attention was paid to.. the dangers of using one's home equity as an ATM to subsidize cars, clothes and vacations."

With the bubble burst, Walton and Butler assume that prosperity congregants have taken a disproportionate hit, and are curious as to how their churches will respond. Butler thinks that some of the flashier ministries will shrink along with their congregants' fortunes. Says Walton, "You would think that the current economic conditions would undercut their theology." But he predicts they will persevere, since God's earthly largesse is just as attractive when one is behind the economic eight ball.

A recently posted testimony by a congregant at the Brownsville Assembly of God near Pensacola, Fla., seems to confirm his intuition. Brownsville is not even a classic Prosperity congregation — it relies more on the anointing of its pastors than on scriptural promises of God. But the believer's note to his minister illustrates how magical thinking can prevail even after the mortgage blade has dropped. "Last Sunday," it read, "You said if anyone needed a miracle to come up. So I did. I was receiving foreclosure papers, so I asked you to anoint a picture of my home and you did and your wife joined with you in prayer as I cried. I went home feeling something good was going to happen. On Friday the 5th of September I got a phone call from my mortgage company and they came up with a new payment for the next 3 months of only \$200. My mortgage is usually \$1020. Praise God for his Mercy & Grace."

And pray that the credit market doesn't tighten any further.

Thoughts?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? John's baptism was the baptism of repentance. What is repentance? A turning around? Jesus came as the second Adam to do what? To reverse what Adam had done, to turn the human race around???? Was the baptism then part of Jesus declaring His mission as the second Adam to die a death which would destroy death and rise again thus turning the human race around from the path of death and put the human race back in harmony with God and eternal life?

How was Jesus turning the race around? Symbolically? Legally? Literally – to actually take our condition and reverse what sin had done to mankind?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What does this tell us? Who was involved in the salvation of mankind? The entire Godhead, who is for us? The entire Godhead, no need for one to work on the other they are all involved in our salvation!

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph “The temptations...” thoughts? Did Jesus have it harder than Adam? Did Jesus have to do more than Adam had to do? What? How so?

Last sentence on the page states, “The perfect sacrificial Lamb took on Himself our sin in order to restore us to unity and harmony with the Creator.” – thoughts?

What does this mean? Who is our Creator?

Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:3

For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. Col 1:16

Jesus was reconciling the human race to Himself as well as the Father and the Spirit!

THURSDAY

Read the memory verse at the top Matt 9:35 – why did Jesus do so much healing?

Because it is the best way to demonstrate the plan of salvation which is the plan of healing! Notice Jesus did not go around legally defending criminals in court and getting everybody off, no because this would misrepresent the plan of salvation. Instead, He went around healing showing the truth that the plan of salvation is the plan of healing and restoration!

Read second paragraph “His miracles...” thoughts?

Imagine an AIDS ward, some are suffering with pneumonia, some with meningitis, some with lesions on their skin, some with eye infections because while all have the same underlying disease it manifests differently in people. But imagine if those with pneumonia were making fun of those with meningitis and those with skin lesions are hateful to those with eye infections and on and on. How sad would that be?

This is how we are on earth. We all have the same sickness of sinfulness but it manifests differently in different people, but notice how critical we are of others who symptoms are different than ours?

But God sees us all sick and suffering and all in need of the same remedy and sees how healthy we will all look if we accept His remedy. Shouldn’t we see it the same way?

Last paragraph – read – how do you see our relationships with each other in heaven? Will there be differences or do you see us coming into oneness as Jesus prayed:

JN 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,
 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: 23 I in them and you in me. May they be

brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Where else in the Bible do you find two people being described as being one? Adam and Eve the two shall be one, could it be that in heaven we will have such unity that we will love others and be loved by others so completely it will be equal to what we experience in marriage here?

FRIDAY

Read questions 1 and 2 and discuss