



2025 Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy Lesson 6 Understanding Sacrifice

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read Memory Verse:

- And they sang a new song: “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. Revelation 5:9 NIV84.

What does this text mean to you?

What is the connection between Jesus being worthy and His being slain?

The answer depends on how you think God’s law functions.

Through the imposed human-type law, the answer is: Jesus is worthy because He paid the legal penalty and therefore earned the right to take the scroll. He purchased the legal right with His blood. His blood, it is taught, represents His death, which this model teaches is the legal penalty that He had to pay to God and the law in order to earn the legal right to purchase men back from their legal condemnation and imprisonment on death row.

Through design law, Jesus is worthy because 1) He proved God is trustworthy; He demonstrated, proved, revealed, that though He has all power He will never use His power to take away individual freedom. He left His sinful creatures free to abuse and kill Him. He is safe with infinite power—we can trust Him. 2) He is worthy because He cured the sin problem, eradicated the cause of death and restored the cause of life into humanity. His blood is understood to represent, as the Bible teaches, His sinless life (not His death), (the life is in the blood Lev. 17:11). And Jesus taught that the saved are only saved by ingesting His flesh and blood (John 6:53). In other words, the blood, represents His life, and it saves us when we internalize His life and are reborn. As Paul wrote, “It is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.” The flesh represents the truth, the Word that became flesh, and when we ingest the truth about God we are won to trust and then open the heart to receive from the Holy Spirit the blood, the life of Christ. Jesus:

1. Revealed the truth that He is love, He is truth, He gives real freedom, and we are safe with God who has all power

2. Destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness and purified the human species God created in Eden
3. Purged the cause of death from humanity
4. Perfectly restored the image of God in humanity
5. Became the second Adam, the new head of humanity, with a new cleansed spirit, life, that we can receive by faith
6. Revealed that there was no manufacturer's defect in Adam and Eve, in other words that humanity's fall into sin was not because God had created humanity with some flaw.

Read first paragraph,

- When Jesus came toward him, John the Baptist declared: “ ‘Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’ ” (John 1:29, NKJV). This was an unmistakable reference to the idea of animal sacrifice, all of which pointed to Christ's substitutionary death in behalf of all humanity. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025*, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy, p. 46.

What did John the Baptist say Jesus takes away? The **sin** of the world—what does this mean? Is this the same as saying Jesus takes away the punishment of God for sin?

The lesson points out that Jesus' death is a substitutionary death in behalf of all humanity—how do you explain that?

What law lens? Imposed law results in the man-made theological construct called penal substitution; design law results in comprehending reality that sin damaged humanity and through Jesus God cures the terminal condition.

- God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might **become** the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 NIV84, emphasis mine.

According to this passage, the reason for Christ's substitutionary sacrificial death was not a legal one; it was not for a penal reason. It was not a payment. It was also not to assuage God's wrath or propitiate His anger, for God was never our problem. God has always been for us (Romans 8:31); God was in Jesus reconciling the world to Himself (2 Corinthians 5:19).

God was not changed by Adam's sin, nor did His law change. Rather, it was the condition of Adam that changed from sinless, loyal, faithful, and trustworthy to sinful, disloyal, unfaithful, and untrustworthy; he became a fear-ridden and selfish being. Adam no longer had a pure heart and right spirit!

Thus, Jesus became our human substitute, taking up the humanity that had been damaged by Adam, so that we might *become* the righteousness of God, so that humanity might be cleansed from sin and restored to His perfect ideal.

But why is it that Christ's substitutionary death was required for us to become righteous? Why was Christ's death necessary to save humans from sin? Couldn't God just forgive? Couldn't God just use divine power to heal any and all who trust Him?

Not if one understands reality, the universe and life as God built it to operate. If one thinks through imposed law, then they misconstrue sin to be merely broken rules with artificially inflicted external punishments, and they will ask why then couldn't God just forgive and heal without the death of Christ.

And if the problem were only external, only legal, then God could forgive and give another chance. But if the problem is actual, something in reality that changed in the heart, mind, motives, character of Adam and Eve, then external solutions won't work. Internal solutions are required. And those solutions cannot be placed into a human heart and mind without the human choosing them. To get the solution into humanity, it must be chosen by a human.

This is why all the metaphors of Scripture are about healing the inner person:

- Take out a stony heart and put in a tender heart
- Being reborn
- Recreated in the inner man
- New heart and right spirit
- Circumcision of the heart by the Spirit
- Write God's law on the heart and mind

And why Jesus said that the kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21), and why Zechariah says that God does not win by might or power but by the way the Spirit works, which is truth and love (Zechariah 4:6).

God has the power to reach inside any person and make changes against that person's will. But if God were to do that it would erase that person, destroy that person's individuality, turn them into a robot, drone, mindless lemming. The only way to save individuals is through truth presented love while leaving everyone free to choose for themselves. Further, if God were to use power to override an individual's will, to make changes in them they do not choose for themselves, it would sustain Satan's charges and be proof that God is not love, does not give freedom and we cannot trust God.

So while God does forgive freely, healing the sin problem in hearts and minds cannot be done by God's external actions. It requires the internal application of God's healing truth and love restoring trust and purging the infection of fear and selfishness. And no human being since Adam sinned could do this, except Jesus.

Further, God could have taken dirt, formed a brand-new human body and breathed into that body a new breath of life and thereby created a brand-new sinless human being—but that human being would not be related to Adam. That human being would not be part of the species God created in Eden.

The only way to save the species God created in Eden, was for a member of that species to choose perfect love and trust in God and destroy the infection of fear and selfishness. Thus Jesus was born human, partook of that life through Mary, but His Father was the Holy Spirit and thus in the person of Jesus the human species was saved, cleansed, healed.

Jesus came to take away sin, to take away the fear and selfishness infecting the spirits, the hearts of humanity, and thereby to destroy death (2 Timothy 1:10) and the cause of sin and death which are the lies of Satan (Hebrews 2:14), thereby healing this creation. And the fear and selfishness, which is the corrupting elemental aspect of sin infecting, tainting, polluting, and decaying our spirits (hearts) and souls (minds), had to be purged, removed, destroyed, eliminated, in order for humanity to be cleansed from sin.

Jesus had to provide **the truth** to free our minds from the lies of Satan—in order to win us (morally influence) to trust in Him—but He also needed to provide, in order to save *the human species created in Eden*, **a cleansed, purified, renewed, and perfected human spirit** (life, heart, motivational energy) that we receive through our trust in Him.

When Adam sinned, he corrupted himself, infecting his life with sin. His spirit (life, heart, motivational energy) became contaminated with fear and selfishness; his energizing motives to action were no longer love-driven selflessness but were fear-driven selfishness, the survival-of-the-fittest instinct.

And every human being is an offspring, outgrowth, extension *of that same life (spirit)!*

We are all born infected with sinfulness, with fear and selfishness, with unholiness (Psalm 51:5). In order to save us from this terminal sinful condition, Jesus had to not only restore our trust in God by a revelation of truth, but He also had to purge, cleanse, remove, eliminate, eradicate, destroy the sinfulness (fear and selfishness) from humanity.

And in order to do that, Jesus had to partake of the humanity, of the very life (spirit) given to Adam in Eden, that Adam had corrupted and to purify that life.

So, what was needed to save humanity from this terminal sin condition?

A human being who is part of Adam, part of *this* creation, a human being who partakes of that same life, that same spirit or life-energy, that was breathed into Adam in Eden, that life which is now infected with fear and selfishness, and who then overcomes and eradicates the contamination and purifies that life, thereby destroying the terminal condition, purging the fear and selfishness, and restoring God's perfect, pure, undefiled love back into this human creation, by perfecting/cleansing the spirit—the life given to Adam and shared by all of us.

And on the cross, Jesus chose only the pure life, the pure energy of love, that He received from the Holy Spirit and, thereby, destroyed the death-causing infection, the impure corrupting quality, character, inclination, motivation of fear and selfishness contaminating the life-energy breathed into Adam (2 Timothy 1:10).

At the cross, Jesus destroyed the carnal terminal sin nature and arose in a purified humanity and became the new head of humanity (Hebrews 5:9), and He now stands in God's presence, not only in His pre-incarnate position as the Son of God but also as the representative head of humanity—Jesus, a real human being, sinless and perfect. He stands in the heavenly counsel as Adam's substitute, fulfilling the role that God had originally designed for Adam.

Now through faith, each one of us can receive that same pure, divine life-giving energy (spirit—life) via the indwelling Holy Spirit, who takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it in us, invigorating us with a reborn new spirit. Christ is the vine and we are the branches (John 15:5), who, being grafted into Christ by faith, receive the new invigorating spirit (life) from Him through the indwelling Holy Spirit. We die to the old spirit of fear and selfishness and live a new life with a new spirit of love and trust. As Paul wrote,

- For **Christ's love compels us**, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should **no longer live for themselves** [no longer live the life of selfishness] but for him who died for them and was raised again. 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 NIV84, emphasis mine.

We, with our new life, our new spirit, our new purified spiritual energy are motivated, animated, compelled with new desires, attitudes, and priorities so that we become literal partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). As our spirits, our internal life-energy, our motives, drives, desires now come from Jesus and no longer come from what we inherited from Adam, we grow daily in godliness and, despite ongoing temptations from our old habits and conditioned responses, our renewed reborn spirits are no longer captive to fear and selfishness. As Paul wrote,

- For God has not given us a spirit of fear [that we inherited from Adam], but of power and of love and of a sound mind [that we receive by faith/trust from Jesus]. 2 Timothy 1:7 NKJV.

We are literally changing from a *life, spirit*, of fear and selfishness to a *life, spirit*, of love and trust via the indwelling Holy Spirit.

And this is possible only because Jesus, as our human substitute, took up humanity infected with fear and selfishness by Adam and purified that life. Jesus revealed the truth to win us to trust, and He provides us with a new spirit, a new life, sinless and pure.

SUNDAY

The lesson points to many OT sacrifices that were futile—such as Cain's offering of plants, or Isaiah 1 and the sacrifices of animals in the prescribed way God had instructed. What makes these sacrifices futile?

What was the purpose of the animal sacrifices? Was there any saving benefit in sacrificing animals?

- The gifts and sacrifices being offered **were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper**. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order... But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**. Hebrews 9:9,10, 10:3,4 NIV84, emphasis mine

Is this true? Is it true only after Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection or was it true in OT times as well?

Is there other evidence from the OT that animal sacrifices do not save and were not required for salvation?

- I want your constant love, not your animal sacrifices. I would rather have my people know me than burn offerings to me. Hosea 6:6 GNT

And are there examples of people in the OT being saved without providing animal sacrifice? Wouldn't that be evidence that animal sacrifices are not required for salvation? Are there any such examples?

- Naaman
- Nebuchadnezzar
- Daniel and the Jews during the 70-year captivity

So if animal sacrifices could not take away sin, only Jesus can take away sin, then what was the purpose of the animal sacrifices?

It was theater, object lesson, teaching tools, ceremony, ritual, designed to reach hearts and minds with what will take away sin—conviction of one's own sin-sickness and revulsion of it, a deep desire to be free of it, and a remedy that will heal, save, cleanse, purify, recreate, renew, provide a new sinless life. It was designed to teach how Jesus provides us a new sinless life (represented by His blood) which, when we receive it, cleanses us from sin.

Consider Psalm 51, David's prayer of repentance after his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. See how this was all taught in OT times:

- Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Psalm 51:1, 2 NIV84

What is David asking for? From where does he want sin blotted out? What does he want cleansed? He realizes something is wrong within his heart that needs purifying.

- For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge. Psalm 51:3,4 NIV84

He acknowledges his condition is terminal and that he cannot run from it; no matter where he goes he carries his sinful self there. He acknowledges that God's diagnosis of his terminal condition is perfectly accurate, and God is perfectly justified to be so accurate and truthful in His diagnosis of David.

- Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Psalm 51:5 NIV84

He realizes his sin problem has been within him his entire life. He was born this way, infected with fear and selfishness, and that his recent actions are the fruit, the manifestation of a sin-infected heart with which he was born and if he is going to be saved legal pardon won't due. He needs renewal and cleansing of the inmost motivational energy of his being.

- Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Psalm 51:6 NIV84

He understands that what God wants is to heal what is broken in his heart and mind. As Jesus said the kingdom of God is with you, the removal of sin must be from the inner workings of our being. God's living law of love and trust must be written in our hearts and minds. Sin is not blotted out of record books, it is blotted out of hearts and minds and that is what David is asking for.

- Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Psalm 51:7 NIV84

He again asks for his cleansing, the purification of his heart and mind and he acknowledges that only God has the healing solution. Only the Creator can re-create him back to God's original intent. And this cleansing of David, not records, is documented history. Because David is called a man after God's own heart. The selfishness and lust that led David to commit these acts of sin were removed from David's heart and mind, but the history of his acts have not been erased—we are still reading about them.

- Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Psalm 51:8,9 NIV84

He is asking to be renewed, to have the crushing guilt and shame taken out of his heart, to be glad again, and to have fear and selfishness blotted out of his character so that he can one day see God face to face

- Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Psalm 51:10 NIV84

He again acknowledges his need and desire for God to heal his heart, change his motives, and renew his mind so that they operate upon other-centered love. This is reality. This is what Jesus does for us. This is not legal adjustment in books, it is actual recreation of the being.

- Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Psalm 51:11 NIV84

He acknowledges God's presence is where he wants to be, and only the Holy Spirit can fix what is broken inside and enable him to stand in God's presence. The internalizing of the life of Jesus which is brought by the Holy Spirit that gives us a new life, the life of Christ, is the only means of salvation, of purification of our sinful, fear-ridden, selfish hearts, in both OT times and now.

- Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Psalm 51:12 NIV84

He asks for the joy of healing and strength to stay compliant with God's treatment plan.

- Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. Psalm 51:13 NIV84

He acknowledges the responsibility and privilege to share God's remedy with others dying of the same condition. This is the law of exertion and the law of love. As we exercise we get stronger, if we exercise love we get stronger in love, and the more we give the more we receive. It is design law in operation. But we can only share God's healing truth with others if we ourselves have experienced it, have partaken of it, have come to know God for ourselves. If we instead accept a substitute false system of legal payments to an offended and wrathful deity, then we will tell people a false system and not teach transgressors God's ways. Just like the Jews did in Christ's day and He told them that they search the world to find a convert and make him twice the son of hell as they are.

- Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. Psalm 51:14 NIV84.

He specifically requests to have his heart healed from murder, from willingness to kill another child of God, and knows such freedom results in rejoicing and praise.

- Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. Psalm 51:15 NIV84.

He acknowledges that his natural heart cannot even praise God, but all praise is the outflow of God's healing love transforming him.

- You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. Psalm 51:16 NIV84

Here, in OT times, David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, documents that rituals are meaningless, that animal sacrifices do not save, and God doesn't want them.

- The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Psalm 51:17 NIV84

David under inspiration of the Holy Spirit documents what God wants: the healing and restoration of his children back into harmony with him—his design of love—his protocols of life.

- In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. Psalm 51:18 NIV84

David asks God to make his helpers effective in revealing the truth and distributing the remedy to the world.

- Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar. Psalm 51:19 NIV84

He understands that if Israel rightly represents God, then the rituals will be effective teaching tools to help people open their hearts and minds to experience the genuine remedy—the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

All through Scripture the message is the same. Humankind is infected with fear and selfishness (sin), which is deviant from God’s design for life and is a terminal condition (dead in trespasses and sin). God is working through Christ to heal each person, restoring in them God’s heart of love! This is what God is seeking to achieve in each of us—complete transformation of heart.

But Satan has perverted all of this by getting people to believe God’s law is imposed law and then the system of sacrifices, designed to teach God’s love, mercy, and grace being poured out to heal hearts and minds came to teach the opposite, a punitive god who required sacrifice to appease his wrath.

FRIDAY

In the third paragraph the lesson quotes from the book, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, let’s read and unpack that quote:

- “The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, satisfy its claims. Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could make atonement for its transgression. None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven. Christ would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son. Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63.

What do you hear? What law lens do you hear it through? It is always wise to go back to the source and read the larger context, and also let the author who wrote it explain themselves, and of course, to think through design law.

- The Son of God, heaven's glorious Commander, was touched with pity for the fallen race. His heart was moved with infinite compassion as the woes of the lost world rose up before Him. But divine love had conceived a plan whereby man might be redeemed. The broken law of God demanded the life of the sinner. [What law lens? If we think imposed then the broken law demands legal enforcement by the ruling authority, but if we think design law—breaking the

law of respiration by jumping in the ocean with weights tied to your feet demands the life of the sinner because one is out of harmony with the law life is built to function upon. The statement doesn't say which way it is, so one has to read into the passage what they think it means. If we use the other evidences from both Scripture and the author who wrote this, then we understand this simply describing how reality works. It is another design law statement.] In all the universe there was but one who could, in behalf of man, **satisfy its claims**. [What are the claims or demands of God's law? That life operate in harmony with it. The law of respiration demands or claims one breathe and that if one doesn't then one dies. Only Jesus could meet its claim or demand by restoring God's perfect design back into humanity while simultaneously revealing the truth about God, that God is love] Since the divine law is as sacred as God Himself, only one equal with God could **make atonement for its transgression**. [At-one-ment means to restore the breach and bring unity, because the questions were about God, only God could answer those questions. Again see the last several paragraphs in this chapter where she develops this theme. It is the outworking of the design law of truth and love, not imposed rules. Trust must be won.] None but Christ could redeem fallen man from the **curse of the law and bring him again into harmony with Heaven**. [The curse of the law, what is that? A legal condemnation, or if a person ties a plastic bag over their head are they under the penalty or curse of the law of respiration? What is the power that kills them, the power comes from the law as Paul says in 1 Corinthians "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law." (1 Corinthians 15:56 NIV84). Or as the GNT renders it, "Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law." (GNT). Breaking the protocols of life, result in ruin and death because the law cannot be changed to meet a person who insists on not breathing or breaking any other design law. Again, nothing penal legal here.] Christ would take upon Himself the guilt and shame of sin—sin so offensive to a holy God that it must separate the Father and His Son. Christ would reach to the depths of misery to rescue the ruined race. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 63. [He who knew no sin became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God 2 Cor 5:21. Jesus partook of the life contaminated by Adam and experienced the emotional anguish, guilt, shame that sin causes through that life. He felt the emotional separation from His Father, the crushing emotional distress in Gethsemane, and felt the public shame of being stripped naked, mocked, beaten, crucified—yet He despised the shame and destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness through love. Why must the Father and Son be separated—it is in the context of saving, of healing, of curing the sin condition. It was the only means to purge the infection of fear and selfishness. And Jesus' humanity could not have died if the Father didn't let go of Him and allow Him to die. Do you hear the word "offensive" as causing God to be resentful and emotionally upset, and He just couldn't take it any more? Or as in a football game, the offense has the ball and is being offensive, attacking the defense. In other words, sin attacks, sin is offensive, it cuts, severs, divides, breaks, ruins. Lies believed break the circle of love and trust and incite fear and selfishness. Fear and selfishness cut, sever, divide, break the bonds of love and trust. So sin is offensive, it severs the connection. As James wrote, "sin when full grown brings forth death." Thus, Jesus, in order to destroy the infection of fear and selfishness had to partake of the infection as a human, live a sinless life as a human, developing a sinless human character and then let the offensiveness of sin cut Him off from His Father without using

divine power to stop it. It was selfless love in action. And in that choice to love and allow the offense of sin to cut Their tie, Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light!].

MONDAY and TUESDAY

Read pink section at the bottom of Monday's lesson:

- Think about just how bad sin must be that only the death of Jesus, the incarnate Word (see John 1:1–3, 14), could atone for it. What should this tell us about what our attitude toward sin must be? *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy*, p. 48.

What does atone mean as the lesson uses it here? How do you hear the word atone in this context?

Read the second and third paragraphs in TUESDAY's lesson:

- Years after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, Peter reflected on what had transpired, and he wrote, “Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Pet. 1:18, 19, ESV).
Jesus lived the one human life that satisfied the holiness of God; the rest of us have sinned, and the way we live our sinful lives quite literally tells lies about the nature of our Maker. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy*, p. 49.

What do you make of this text quoted in the lesson,

- “Knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Pet. 1:18, 19, ESV).

What does the text say we were ransomed from? “The futile ways inherited from your forefathers!”

We are ransomed from fear and selfishness, from sinfulness, from the carnal nature, from the sin that David says we are all conceived and born in. This is the corrupted, unclean spirit of fear and selfishness with which we are all born and without divine intervention leads to all acts of sin.

And the blood of Christ ransoms us from it, because the blood is symbolic of His sinless life that we receive through faith so that we surrender our old life of fear and selfishness, dying to self, and are reborn with a new life, the life of Christ. This ransom price is paid to you and I.

What about the second paragraph that Jesus satisfied the holiness of God? And I want us to link this back to the question from Monday about Jesus atoning for our sin—what does atoning for our sin and

satisfying the holiness of God mean? How do you understand it? Does the law lens one holds make a difference?

Let's examine Atonement through the Seven Levels of Moral Decision Making

LEVEL 1: Reward and Punishment

Right and wrong is determined by whoever holds the power to rule by threat of punishment and hope of reward. Mercy (failure to punish) is seen by others at this level as being weak, rather than being moral.

- **Satisfaction Theory of the atonement:** God said don't do something, but when we disobey and do what God said not to do, this dishonors and offends him. Therefore, in his justice, he responds with angry vengeance to execute the disobedient to satisfy his outrage. But then Jesus stepped in between God and man to become humanity's substitute. Thus, instead of killing man, God killed his Son in our place and is now satisfied that his honor and justice are preserved.

LEVEL 2: Marketplace Exchange

Right and wrong is determined by an equitable agreement between two parties, also known as quid pro quo – "I'll do something for you if you do something for me."

- **Ransom Theory of the atonement:** Because humanity is now the legal property of Satan and under his control, the devil claimed legal rights to this earth and the lives of the descendants of Adam and Eve. Therefore, God struck a bargain with the devil to exchange the life of Christ for the lives of the rest of humanity.

LEVEL 3: Social Conformity

Right and wrong is determined by community consensus, for example, when a child says, "But everyone else is doing it." Right is deemed right by the approval of peers.

- **Governmental Theory of the atonement:** Jesus died so that God could publicly display His dissatisfaction with sin without punishing sinners and thus convince sinners that His government is fair.

LEVEL 4: Law and Order

Right and wrong is determined by a codified system of rules, impartial judges, imposed punishments, and respect for authority.

- **Penal Substitution Theory of the atonement:** Jesus died to pay the legal penalty the law demanded and the heavenly judge imposed. The law must be kept. Man broke the law, thus justice demands and requires the imposition of the proper punishment. Someone had to be executed to pay the legal penalty. Jesus became our substitute and was executed in our place by God the Father (as the righteous judge) to pay that penalty. In doing so, the integrity

of the law is maintained and sinners can be pardoned, but only if they claim the legal payment made by Jesus.

LEVEL 5: Love for Others

Right is determined by doing what is in the best interest of others, realizing people have value in who they are irrespective of the rules.

- **Moral Influence Theory of the atonement:** Sin separated us from God and corrupted our hearts, so that we no longer trusted God, but God loved us too much to let us go, so Christ's death was the means to reach us with his love and restore us to trust in him.

LEVEL 6: Principle-Based Living

Right is understanding the design protocols and principles upon which life is constructed to operate and intelligently choosing to live in harmony with them. Right is not doing something because a rule says to do so, but because it is understood to actually work this way.

- **Recapitulation and Christus Victor Theories of the atonement :** Christ's life, death, and resurrection is understood to be the only means to fix what sin had done to God's creation. When mankind sinned, the condition of humankind was changed, placing it out of harmony with God and his design for life. Humankind was now held in bondage by their own condition of sinfulness (carnal nature), their terminal state (death), and the lies about God told by Satan. Christ came to break these three powers and fix what sin has done to this creation. Thus "he who knew no sin became sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God." 2Cor 5:21.

LEVEL 7: Understanding Friend of God

Those at this level not only have love for God and others (Level 5), not only understand God's design protocols for life (Level 6), but also understand God's purposes and intelligently choose to cooperate in fulfilling their role in His purposes.

- **Healing Substitution Reality:** The plan of salvation is understood to have a deeper and broader intent than just the redemption of the human species. Both level five and six are true: God's character of love has been misrepresented, His methods of truth, love, and freedom have not been fully understood, so God had a larger purpose than just the salvation of humankind; He was also solidifying the unfallen beings in loyalty to His design methods and character of love.

But the Bible uses language like satisfaction, ransom, etc., so how do we understand these terms if they do not mean the level 1 through 4 meaning?

When we return to level seven design law understanding, then these Bible descriptions take on a deep and beautiful meaning and enhances our faith, our love, and our appreciation for God.

Satisfaction is understood in the light of a creation out of harmony with the protocols of life, dead in trespasses and sin. In such a state, God, like a parent whose child is dying of a terminal illness, would only be satisfied with the healing and restoration of his creation. In this light we understand why God was pleased that Christ was bruised. It was only through his death that the remedy to save his children could be achieved (Isa. 53:10). Anything short of perfect healing of his children would not satisfy, but

- When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. Isaiah 53:11 NIV84.

Ransom is the price necessary to free someone from bondage. Level seven understands that sinners are held in the bondage of lies about God and their own carnal natures. Christ, through his perfect life, selfless death, and resurrection, has revealed the truth about God that destroys the lies of Satan and frees us to trust God (Heb. 2:14). In trust we open our hearts, and the Holy Spirit takes the perfect character developed by Christ and reproduces it in us (John 16:14–15; 1 Cor. 2:16; Heb. 5:9). We become new beings, freed from the slavery of our carnal natures (2 Cor. 5:17). We become partakers of the divine nature! (2 Pet. 1:4).

Governmental theory, understood in its proper sense, is that God is fair in how he governs, which is by design law. To repair the deviation from his design, God himself took the responsibility of providing the remedy to heal and restore. God wins the loyalty, love, devotion, and trust of his intelligent creatures only through his methods of truth, love, and freedom. The universe stands secure for all eternity future not because angels with flaming swords stand on every street corner to police the populace but because it is inhabited by only those who, having been convinced beyond a doubt of God's method of governing, are like Jesus in character.

Penal Substitution is not in the Bible. In terms of law and order, God is Creator and His design protocols are his law. But God in His mercy added a written codification of His law specifically designed to protect, diagnose, and bring sinful humans back to Him for healing. God's law is immutable and unchangeable because it originates in the heart and character of God, who is love.

Moral influence is accepted as a reality that is part of the healing plan. Humans living in the darkness and despair of sin, fearful and survival-driven, need love and truth to penetrate their clouded minds to influence them, draw them, woo them back to God again. But it is also understood that moral influence alone is not enough to fix the damage sin has done, that a true remedy is also needed to restore in the sinner a God-shaped heart!

Christus Victor and recapitulation are understood to be Christ's victory over all opposition to his methods: truth overcoming lies; love overcoming selfishness; Christ, in his humanity and exercising his human will, overcoming fears and selfishness to develop a perfect human character in harmony with God's design for life—God's law of love. Jesus took up humanity, damaged and broken by sin, and perfected it. In Jesus the human race is restored to its right place in God's kingdom of love.

Healing Reality is God's universal plan to restore all things in heaven and earth united under one head, Jesus Christ. This is true at-one-ment. All metaphors, rightly understood, teach the same reality!

WEDNESDAY

Jesus at the Temple—the lesson rightly points out that the second temple, though smaller and at its dedication did not have God’s Shekinah glory fill it, is still described as being more glorious than Solomon’s temple, because Jesus walked there.

But why is Jesus’ walking and teaching at the second temple something that makes it more glorious than God showing up in His fiery glory?

Because God’s glories not in might and power it is in His character of love and Jesus is the ultimate, perfect, pinnacle disbursement, revelation, distribution of God’s character and methods of love.

And if this is so, that God glories in His character of love, which always rejoices with the truth, then does that have any implication for,

- “Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.” Revelation 14:7 NIV84.

What does this mean for us at this time in human history if God glories not in might and power but in love and truth?

THURSDAY

The lesson focuses on what we can learn from the scenes Bible writers have written about the throne room of God:

Read the second to the last paragraph,

- Satan has hurled many accusations against God, arguing that He is arbitrary, selfish, and severe, but even a brief moment in God’s throne room exposes Satan’s lies. It is in seeing Christ for who He truly is, “ ‘the Lamb who was slain’ ” (Rev. 5:12, NKJV), that enables us to see the Father as He truly is. How comforting to know that by seeing Jesus, we see what the Father is like (John 14:9). And the greatest revelation of what the Father is like is seen in Jesus dying on the cross for us. *Adult SS Guide 2nd Q 2025*, Allusions, Images, Symbols: How to Study Bible Prophecy, p. 51.

What is the lesson trying to tell us?

Can we trust God? Why?

References to question in Q&A

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