

BIBLE TRUTHS EXPLAINED

What the Bible Teaches About

ATONEMENT and REDEMPTION

GORDON LYONS

ESV Edition

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The series *Bible Truths Explained*
may be downloaded, printed and used free of charge
by individuals, groups, and institutions.

However, none of these doctrinal notes
may be offered for sale or for commercial publication

Bible Truths Explained: *Atonement and Redemption*
First published: 2007
www.1-word.com
Web site publication

Bible Truths Explained

Atonement and Redemption

Copyright © 2007 Gordon Lyons
All Rights Reserved

The entire text of this work, or extracts from it, may be quoted elsewhere on condition that the author's original text remains unaltered (except for localized spellings) and the name of the original work, including the title, and the name of the author are acknowledged in a format similar to the following:

Reproduced [or Quoted] from
Bible Truths Explained: atonement and redemption
Copyright © 2007, Gordon Lyons
www.1-word.com

Any quotations in these Works taken from other authors remain the property of those authors or their representatives, and may require the written consent of the respective copyright holders for republication. This does not apply to quotations from any author's works that are now in the public domain.

Permitted Charges and Payments

Unless otherwise stated, all Works produced by this author must remain free of charge, and must not be offered for sale or for commercial publication without the prior written consent of the author.

However, Organizations, Institutions, and Educational establishments, etc. are at liberty to recover from their members or students the costs of printing, duplicating, copying to electronic media, or otherwise reproducing these commentaries or doctrinal studies in order to provide individual copies to their members or students.

Translation Information

The entire unabridged text of any of this author's original Works may be translated and made available in other languages on condition that the essential meaning of the text is not altered and that the name of the original work(s) and the name of the author are acknowledged in a form similar to that shown below:

Translated from
Bible Truths Explained: atonement and redemption
Copyright © 2007, Gordon Lyons
www.1-word.com

Providing that the above conditions are met, the full text of translated editions, or extracts from them, may be made available free of charge on the Internet, or elsewhere.

Any quotations in these Works taken from other authors remain the property of those authors or their representatives, and may require the written consent of the respective copyright holders for republication. This does not apply to quotations from any author's works that are now in the public domain.

Scripture quotations
are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.
Copyright © 2001 by www.crosswaybibles.org
Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.
Used by permission.
All rights reserved.

PRINCIPAL WORKS CONSULTED

- Barnes, Alfred *Notes on The Bible*, Electronic edition (public domain)
- Bauer, Walter /
revised and edited by
Danker, Frederick William A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, (Third Edition BDAG) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- Berkhof, Louis *Systematic Theology*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1939, 1941 reprint.
- Boettner, Loraine *Roman Catholicism*, Phillipsburg: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1962
- Calvin, John *Institutes*: [Beveridge Translation, 1800, Battles Translation Vols. 1-4, 1960] Rio, WI, USA: Ages Software, Inc., The John Calvin Collection, 2000, Electronic edition (CD).
- Clarke, Adam *Commentary on the New Testament*: Electronic edition (public domain)
- Dabney, R. L. *Systematic Theology*, [St. Louis: Presbyterian Publishing Company of St. Louis, 1871, second ed. 1878] Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust edition, 1985.
- Gaebelein, Frank E
& various contributing authors *Various Volumes*, The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Frank E. Gaebelein, (General Editor): Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House.
- Gill, John *Exposition of the Entire Bible*, Electronic edition (public domain)
- Hodge, Charles *Systematic Theology*, Vols. 1-3; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977 reprint.
- Hodge, Charles *Princeton Sermons*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1879, 1979 reprint.
- Jamieson, Fausset & Brown [JFB] *Commentary on The Whole Bible* (Revised edition, 1961): Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing House, 1991.
- Jones, Dr. D. Martyn-Lloyd *God The Holy Spirit: Great Doctrines of the Bible*, Vol. 2: copyright ©1997 by Elizabeth Catherford and Ann Desmond, Published by Crossway Books, a division of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois 60187, U.S.A. This edition published by arrangement with Good News Publishers. All Rights Reserved. Electronic edition: The Ephesians Four Group, P.O.Box 1505, Escondido, Ca 92033.

- Keil, C.F & Delitzsch, F *Keil & Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament* Vols. 1-10: Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 2000, Findex.Com. All rights reserved. Parsons Church Group, A Division of Findex.com, Inc. Omaha, Nebraska.
- Murray, John *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955, undated reprint.
- Poole, Matthew *A Commentary on The Holy Bible* Vols. 1-3 (1685-1700): Edinburgh, Banner of Truth Trust, 1878, 2000 reprint.
- Robertson, A.T. *Robertson's Word Pictures*, Electronic edition (public domain)
- Smeaton, George *The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1882, 1988 reprint.
- Vaughan, C. R. *The Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1894, 1994 reprint.
- Vincent, Marvin R. *Vincent's Word Studies*, Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 1998, Parsons Technology, Inc., all rights reserved.
- Westminster Confession of Faith*, Inverness: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1976 reprint.

Atonement and Redemption

Important Notice **iii**

Copyright Notices **iv**

Principal Works Consulted **vi**

Contents **ix**

Part 1 **1**

 Synopsis: Atonement and Redemption..... 1

 Note 1: Meaning of Redemption 1

 Note 2: Necessity of Redemption 2

 Note 3: Mode of Redemption 3

 Note 4: Christ, the Redeemer 4

Part 2..... **5**

 The Fall of Man and the Effects of Sin..... 5

 The Fall of Man 5

 Sin Separates..... 6

 Sin Must be Covered..... 7

 (Removed Completely from God’s Sight) 7

 Sexual Relations did not Contribute toward the Fall of Man..... 8

 God Covers Adam and Eve’s Sin 9

 Sin Pollutes Entire Nature 10

 Wages of Sin 11

 Atonement Essential to Forgiveness 12

Part 3.....	15
Atonement in the Old Testament.....	15
Some Old Testament Sacrifices.....	15
The Passover or Paschal Lamb.....	15
Offerings and Sacrifices for Sin.....	15
Unblemished Sacrifice Required.....	16
Part 4.....	19
Atonement in the New Testament.....	19
Sacrifice by The Redeemer.....	19
The Perfections of The Atoning Sacrifice.....	19
Part 5.....	21
The Sufferings of The Redeemer.....	21
The Suffering Servant of the LORD.....	21
Jesus' Humiliation as a Servant.....	22
Tempted by Satan.....	23
Reviled by Men.....	24
Despised by the Pharisees.....	25
Jesus Foretold His Sufferings and Death.....	29
The Garden of Gethsemane.....	30
Interrogated by Caiaphas and Pilate.....	32
Nailed to the Cross.....	33
The Curse of the Cross.....	35
Abandoned by His Father.....	35
Buried in a Borrowed Tomb.....	36
Part 6.....	39
One Sacrifice for Sins Forever.....	39
The Nature of this Perfect Sacrifice for Sin.....	40
Christ, our Paschal Lamb.....	41
Priest and Sacrifice.....	42

Part 7	45
The Resurrection and Exaltation of The Redeemer	45
Redemption Secured	45
Redemption Applied.....	46
Scripture References to Redemption Applied.....	47
(1) Effectual Calling and Regeneration	47
(2) Repentance and Faith.....	48
(3) Reconciliation with God	49
(4) Justification	50
(5) Adoption	51
(6) Union with Christ.....	52
(7) Sanctification.....	53
(8) Resurrection, Translation and Glorification	54
Part 8	57
The Redeemed Children of God	57
The Price of our Redemption	57
The Implications of our Redemption	59
The Practical Outworking of our Redemption	61
Conclusion	61

PART 1**Synopsis: Atonement and Redemption**

All mankind has sinned and fall short of the glory of God; therefore, all mankind are alienated from God by their sin, are abiding under the just wrath of God, and are liable to the eternal punishment of God if they remain unforgiven and unreconciled to God. Fallen and sinful men and women are wholly unable to secure favour with God. Again, in their spiritually dead and sinful condition, sinful men and women are completely incapable of working or contributing toward their salvation and forgiveness of their sins. Nevertheless, in accordance with his own good pleasure and sovereign will, God has provided a way whereby sinners can be redeemed, forgiven and reconciled to him. Redemption, however, can be provided only on the grounds of sacrifice: i.e., on the grounds of blood shed and life given up as an atonement for sin. Again, this sacrifice of atonement must be completely pure, free from blemish, spot or stain, and altogether uncontaminated by sin. Furthermore, this unblemished sacrifice must be offered as a perfect and fully adequate substitute for sinful men and women. Under the old covenant, the LORD God instituted a series of atoning sacrifices and offerings for sin. However, the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin. They were intended only to foreshadow or typify the greater and perfect Sacrifice of Atonement yet to come. This final sacrifice was provided by the Lord Jesus Christ himself—the only truly perfect and righteous Man, and the Lamb of God. The Lord Jesus lived a perfectly righteous and holy life not only on his own behalf but also on behalf of (or vicariously for) all his elect people. As the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus yielded up his holy perfect life on the cross to endure the wrath of God on behalf of sinners, to bear their punishment, to redeem them for himself by his own shed blood, and to atone for their sins fully, finally and forever. This vicarious or substitutionary sacrifice of atonement, which the Lord Jesus provided at the cross, is effective for all his people of all ages from the beginning of the creation to the end of this present age.

Note 1: Meaning of Redemption

To redeem is to 'buy back' at a price, or to ransom to oneself that which was lost or sold. All mankind is lost in sin and sold in slavery to sin. Because of their unforgiven sin, all mankind stands condemned by God, alienated from God and at enmity with God, excepting only those whom the Lord has redeemed for himself. However, redemption—including forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God—cannot be purchased by money or earned by 'upright' or 'righteous' behaviour, good works or good deeds. To this end, the Scripture says:

John 8:34 (ESV)

(34) Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin."

Romans 8:7-8 (ESV)

(7) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. (8) Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Ephesians 4:18 (ESV)

(18) They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. (Cf. Col. 1:21-22)

Psalms 49:7-8 (ESV)

(7) Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, (8) for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice...

The redemption of a sinful human being can be secured only by means of an atoning sacrifice for sin; a sacrifice in which the life-blood of a perfect victim is offered up as an acceptable substitute to God for that individual's sins. No other offering and no other means of achieving forgiveness of sin and reconciliation with God is acceptable to him.

Note 2: Necessity of Redemption

God is intrinsically and absolutely holy, just and righteous. He cannot look on sin; he cannot overlook sin, nor can he allow the slightest taint of sin to approach his most holy presence.

The following passages reveal something of the absolute holiness, power and majesty of God:

Isaiah 6:1-7 (ESV)

(1) In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. (2) Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. (3) And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

(4) And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) And I said:

"Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

(6) Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. (7) And he touched my mouth and said:

"Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

Habakkuk 1:13a (ESV)

(13a) You who are of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong...

If any unholy or unsanctified object or person was to approach the presence of the most holy God, that object or person would be consumed immediately by the overwhelming majesty, glory, holiness and righteousness of God. Thus, it is written:

Deuteronomy 5:24-25 (ESV)

(24) "And you said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man and man still live. (25) Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, we shall die'."

Deuteronomy 9:3 (ESV)

(3) “Know therefore today that he who goes over before you as a consuming fire is the LORD your God. He will destroy them and subdue them before you. So you shall drive them out and make them perish quickly, as the LORD has promised you.”

2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 (ESV)

(8) in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. (9) They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might...

Hebrews 12:28-29 (ESV)

(28) Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, (29) for our God is a consuming fire.

All mankind has sinned. Therefore, no one can approach the most holy and almighty God or be accepted by him while their sin and guilt remains. Before God will hear him, or permit him to approach his holy sanctuary in heaven, that person’s sin must be dealt with and removed completely from God’s sight.

It is utterly impossible for any man or woman to provide the necessary remedy to remove their sin or to bring about their reconciliation with the most high, holy and righteous God. If they are to be forgiven, cleansed and reconciled, God must take the initiative and provide the necessary—and only acceptable—remedy for sin. This he did when he gave his only begotten Son to come into this world, to live a perfectly righteous life, and to suffer and die on the cross on behalf of all his people—all those whom God had given to his Son from the eternal ages past. (John 6:39; 17:11,24)

Redemption, and reconciliation to God, therefore is achieved only by means of an atonement (or expiatory and propitiatory sacrifice) for sin. This atonement was provided when the Lord Jesus—the holy, spotless Lamb of God—shed his blood as a perfectly sinless substitute for sinners. The redemption thus secured at the cross was applied to all his elect people following the Lord’s triumphant resurrection and ascension to God’s right hand in glory.

However, to understand why God required the sacrifice of a perfect Man—the Lord Jesus Christ—it will be necessary for us to look very briefly at the history of redemption as it related to the people of Israel, and to understand something of the significance of the sacrifices and offerings that God required during that era. This we will do at a later stage in this study.

Note 3: Mode of Redemption

The only acceptable way, means or mode of redemption for sinful men and women is that provided by the Lord God himself. The Lord requires that full atonement be made for sin, and that full satisfaction be made to his holy justice and righteousness, before redemption can be obtained and applied.

For many centuries, atonement for sin was foreshadowed or typified by the offering up of unblemished animal sacrifices, and by the sprinkling of their blood. However, these animal sacrifices could never take away sin. They were intended only until the final and sufficient sacrifice should appear for this purpose.

The satisfaction that God required was not animal sacrifices, since these were imperfect and wholly inadequate to take away sin and to cleanse the guilty conscience. Rather, God required a perfect sinless life given up as an atoning sacrifice to meet the demands of his holy law against sin and to make atonement for sin. That perfect sacrifice had to be willing to lay down his own life, and shed his own blood, to make the necessary atonement for sin and to accomplish the work of redemption.

Clearly, it was quite impossible for any member of the sinful human race to meet the requirements necessary to make atonement for sin. A perfect sinless sacrifice was required; and no human being who ever lived was perfect and sinless. Furthermore, even if a sinless human being could have been found who was willing to sacrifice his life for others, this in itself was insufficient to meet all the requirements necessary to redemption. The provision of redemption could come from a divine source alone. Thus, the eternal Son of God took upon himself the form of a man (without sin) in order to provide the perfect atoning sacrifice for sin and to accomplish completely the work of redemption for all God's elect people: a work that could be applied only from the Lord's now exalted position in heavenly glory.

Note 4: Christ, the Redeemer

The Lord Jesus Christ was the Redeemer spoken of in the Holy Scriptures. He was the perfect, holy, sinless Lamb of God—the one who would take away the sin of the world. Thus, the Lord Jesus came into the world in order to live a perfectly obedient, holy and righteous life as a true Man, not only for himself but also on behalf of those whom he had come to redeem. Again, for the sake of his elect, the Lord endured unimaginable sorrows and sufferings, beginning with his voluntary humiliation in taking upon himself the form of a servant, and continuing through his temptations, his vilification at the hands of the people, his exposure to false accusation from the Pharisees and others, his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, his interrogations and beatings at the hands of the religious and civil authorities, his agonising sufferings on the cross, and his abandonment by his Father while he suffered the penalty for our sin, and paid redemption's price by his atoning and substitutionary sacrifice on the cross.

Yet, God vindicated his Son—in fulfilment of his eternal purposes. Christ died. He was buried. But on the third day, he arose triumphant over sin, death, hell and the grave.

It was essential that the Lord rose from death. Firstly, his resurrection proved that God the Father had accepted his work of atonement, and that full and final satisfaction had been made for sin for all time. Secondly, it was essential that Lord Jesus be not only raised from death, but also that he ascend to God's right hand to be exalted by the Father and to apply the work of redemption to the hearts and lives of all his elect people. Thus, although Christ has accomplished the work of redemption, he now sits exalted in heaven to apply all the benefits and blessings of that work, and to function as our Great High Priest continually mediating and interceding for all his people.

PART 2**The Fall of Man and the Effects of Sin****The Fall of Man**

When God created mankind (Adam and Eve), he created them perfect and completely righteous in character and conduct. At the time of their creation, no sin existed in the lives of Adam and Eve. Consequently, they enjoyed close and continued fellowship with the LORD God as he walked and communed with them in the Garden of Eden.

Had our first parents remained free from sin, they would have continued to experience the immediate presence and the blessings of the LORD with them throughout their lives. However, as the Scripture tells us, Eve was beguiled and deceived by the serpent. She heeded the alluring voice of Satan acting through God's animal creation, and she disobeyed the express command of God. Then, she enticed Adam to commit the same sins of disobedience and rebellion against God.

Concerning this, God's Word says:

Genesis 3:1-6 ESV

(1) Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman,

"Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?"

(2) And the woman said to the serpent,

"We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, (3) but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'"

(4) But the serpent said to the woman,

"You will not surely die. (5) For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

(6) So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

By this means, sin entered the world; and by this means, sin passed upon all mankind, for all have inherited Adam and Eve's sinful nature and all have sinned in their own person. (Rom. 5:12)

To return, for a moment, to Adam and Eve: By their sin, they had alienated themselves from their Creator; they had placed themselves at enmity with God, and they had forfeited God's immediate and blessed presence in their lives. Now, they stood far off from God and under the punishment of God for their sin.

This punishment is death: spiritual, physical, and eternal death:

Spiritual death (or alienation from and enmity with God) became effective immediately they sinned against God.

Physical death (or the death of the body) would follow in due course, as degenerative processes of body and mind now began in their lives—a process now common to all mankind.

Eternal death (or the consignment of the whole person to eternal punishment and final separation from God in hell) would occur following the death of the body—unless their sin was to be forgiven, and the punishment averted.

Sin, however, could be forgiven and punishment averted only by the means that God had ordained for this purpose: viz., through the offering up of an atoning sacrifice as a substitute for the sinner.

Sin Separates

As we have seen in the case of Adam and Eve, their sin separated them from God and brought with it God's just punishment, which is death. Nothing that Adam or Eve could do now could remedy the situation, or restore them to fellowship with God. If they were to be forgiven and reconciled, it was not in their power to effect that forgiveness or reconciliation. Thus, if they were to be restored to God's favour and blessings, it could happen only if the LORD God took the initiative and redeemed them to himself. However, should the LORD decide to leave them to the just punishment of their sins, then, ultimately, they would perish eternally in their iniquity.

Concerning the effects of sin, including separation or alienation from God, the Scriptures say:

Isaiah 59:1-2 ESV

(1) Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; (2) but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Jeremiah 5:23-26 ESV

(23) But this people has a stubborn and rebellious heart; they have turned aside and gone away. (24) They do not say in their hearts,

'Let us fear the LORD our God, who gives the rain in its season, the autumn rain and the spring rain, and keeps for us the weeks appointed for the harvest.'

(25) Your iniquities have turned these away, and your sins have kept good from you. (26) For wicked men are found among my people; they lurk like fowling in wait. They set a trap; they catch men.

Romans 5:12 ESV

(12) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Romans 8:7 ESV

(7) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

However, concerning God who cannot look on iniquity or tolerate sin, it is also written:

John 3:16-21 ESV

(16) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

(17) "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (18) Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

(19) "And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. (20) For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. (21) But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God."

Sin Must be Covered

(Removed Completely from God's Sight)

The most high, holy and righteous God is a God who delights in mercy. In his sovereign grace, he determined to show mercy to our first parents. Although he punished them on earth by banishing them from the Garden and obliged them to labour for their daily food, yet he dealt mercifully with them in their fallen sinful condition.

Before they had disobeyed God, Adam and Eve had seen nothing improper or inappropriate in their nakedness, for this was the way in which God had created them and brought them together as man and wife. However, as soon as they had disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit, their eyes (of their mind) were opened. From this point on, they began to comprehend everything from the perspective of a fallen, corrupt and sinful mind. Now, they felt guilty for the sins they had just committed against their Creator and Protector. These sins comprised the following (and possibly more) wilful offences against God:

- **disobedience** to God's express command,
- **unbelief** in the Word of God,
- **pride** in believing that they could know better than God,
- **rebellion** in refusing to submit to God and his Word, and,
- **wickedness** in listening to and obeying the voice of the evil one.

Now, their conscience accused Adam and Eve of their sin and guilt. At once, they knew that their sin had alienated or separated them from the LORD God. They had become spiritually dead (dead in trespasses and sins) and morally corrupt. Consequently, they became confused in mind. In their guilty and confused state of mind, they began to think that their nakedness constituted yet another sin, which had to be concealed from God. Of course, this should never have happened; but it was a result of their sin against God and of their previous disobedience to his express word of command. Thus, Adam and Eve attempted to make for themselves suitable coverings:

Genesis 3:7 ESV

(7) Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.

However, because it represented fallen mankind's attempt to remedy the situation themselves, and because this covering was not of a type acceptable to God, these garments were wholly unacceptable to God. God required first an acknowledgement and confession of sin, and then an appropriate and complete (not partial) garment that would represent the complete covering over of sin.

Sexual Relations did not Contribute toward the Fall of Man

In passing, we must emphasise that the sins that resulted in the fall of man did not lie in natural sexual relations between Adam and his wife. God had created man to enjoy such relations with his wife. While still in the state of original righteousness, and therefore before they sinned, God had expressly commanded Adam and Eve to be fruitful and multiply. Furthermore, God had promised to bless Adam and Eve's conjugal union. Thus, it is written:

Genesis 2:18, 23-25 ESV

(18) Then the LORD God said,

"It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

(23) Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

(24) Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (25) And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

Genesis 1:27-28 ESV

(27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (28) And God blessed them. And God said to them,

"Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Adam and Eve's sins were those of wilful disobedience, unbelief, pride, rebellion, and wickedness (among others). However, now, instead of producing pure and righteous offspring, all their offspring would inherit Adam and Eve's fallen sinful nature. Thus, the blessing of natural procreation became what God had never intended—the means by which a fallen sinful nature would be transmitted to all mankind. Thus, the psalmist declared:

Psalms 51:5 ESV

(5) Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Sexual relations had no bearing on Adam and Eve's sin. It was merely the channel through which their fallen and sinful nature was passed on to all their descendants; i.e., to all mankind. Therefore, when

the psalmist David speaks of being brought forth in iniquity, etc., he is referring to this fallen, sinful nature, which had been conveyed to him through his association with and descent from Adam and Eve.

God Covers Adam and Eve's Sin

What, then, did the LORD do with his sinful and rebellious creation?

He found them both hiding in the Garden, and there the LORD challenged them. He punished them, and placed them under the curse. Then, the LORD brought garments of skin to cloth Adam and Eve.

Genesis 3:21 ESV

(21) And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.

These garments, however, were designed to teach Adam and Eve a lesson: When they had disobeyed God's express command and had eaten the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve had fallen from their state of original righteousness into unrighteousness and sin. Now, they had a sinful nature. They had lost forever that perfectly unblemished and sinless nature with which God had created them. Now, this fallen nature produced within their heart or mind sinful inclinations, tendencies or dispositions. Now, their corrupt fallen nature was biased continually toward sin and evil—and, from this sinful nature, flowed sinful or evil behaviour, exhibited in sinful words or expressions, acts or deeds.

This sinful nature, however, would not be confined to Adam and Eve alone. It would be passed on from them to all their descendants—the entire human race. Thus, God's Word says:

Isaiah 64:6 ESV

(6) We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

Jeremiah 17:9 ESV

(9) The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Matthew 15:18-20a ESV

(18) But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.
(19) For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (20a) These are what defile a person..."

When the LORD had covered Adam and Eve's nakedness with coats of skin, he was demonstrating to them symbolically that sin must be covered, not only in themselves but also in all their descendants—if they were to be forgiven and reconciled to God. Ultimately, of course, God did not intend to redeem and reconcile the entire human race, but the symbolical action or type illustrates the point that sin must be removed from God's sight, and that it *will* be removed either by the redemption (of his elect) or by judgment (of the finally impenitent).

However, God was teaching our first parents another lesson when he covered them with coats of skin. These skins were animal skins, and the animals had to be slain in order to provide the necessary coverings. Thus, God was teaching the first pair that in order to provide a covering for sin, sacrifice was involved—the sacrifice and blood-shedding of a live animal. This was the first example of sacrifice for

sin, and covering of sin. The concept of atoning sacrifice and offering would be developed more fully in later generations, as God revealed his will in this matter, and especially when he gave his Law to Moses, together with all the regulations for sacrifices and offerings for sin.

As we shall see in due course, God would require that sin be not merely covered (this was a temporary expedient, until the time of reformation), but that it be removed completely. However, we will deal with these matters in their proper place.

Sin Pollutes Entire Nature

Why does God so detest sin, iniquity and unrighteousness? God detests sin because, originally, God created the first man and woman upright (perfect), blessed the first pair, and promised to provide for all their needs. However, unbelief, disobedience, and every other sin is a signal demonstration of a person's wilful rebellion against God, his Creator and Provider. Sin led to Adam and Eve's moral and spiritual downfall, and it has led to the moral and spiritual downfall of the entire human race.

The Lord God creates human beings, and he provides them with everything necessary. Mankind, however, has rebelled against the Lord God and against his Son. Men and women refuse to hear or acknowledge God speaking to them in the natural creation or through his Word. Thus, in God's sight, they are his enemies; abiding under his righteous judgment and wrath, and facing the penalty of their sins and iniquities.

But what effect does sin have on a person's life?

Sin pollutes or contaminates a person in thought, word and deed. Everything that he thinks, says or does is poisoned by his corrupt fallen nature. Therefore, he is completely unable to please God in any way whatsoever, or to work toward his forgiveness or reconciliation with God. Furthermore, sinful mankind has no desire to seek God or to live righteously as God requires. His heart is inclined permanently toward evil; and, for the evil propensities that he loves and cherishes in his heart, he will perish for all eternity—unless God himself intervenes.

Thus, God's Word says:

Genesis 6:5 ESV

(5) The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Job 15:14-16 ESV

(14) What is man, that he can be pure? Or he who is born of a woman, that he can be righteous? (15) Behold, God puts no trust in his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure in his sight; (16) how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, a man who drinks injustice like water!

Psalms 53:1-3 ESV

(1) To the choirmaster: according to Mahalath. A Maskil of David.

The fool says in his heart,

"There is no God."

They are corrupt, doing abominable iniquity; there is none who does good. (2) God looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. (3) They have all fallen away; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

Jeremiah 17:9 ESV

(9) The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Matthew 15:19-20 ESV

(19) "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. (20) These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

Wages of Sin

Why do lost mankind face eternal separation from God? Because all have sinned; and the wages or penalty of sin is death. Thus, God says in his Word:

Ezekiel 18:4 ESV

(4) Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

Romans 5:12,18a ESV

(12) Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

(18a) ...one trespass led to condemnation for all men...

Romans 6:23a ESV

(23a) For the wages of sin is death...

Revelation 21:8 ESV

(8) "But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulphur, which is the second death."

As we have noted already, death means the following:

- *Spiritual death*: until they are redeemed and reconciled to God, all mankind remains spiritually dead (dead in trespasses and sins), alienated from God, and at enmity with God; and God remains alienated from, and at enmity with, sinful mankind.
- *Physical death*: Unless Christ returns first, everyone will die physically, and their bodies will be laid in the grave, buried at sea, or cremated; until, at the resurrection, these same bodies will be reconstituted and translated from a perishable to an imperishable body. Then, everyone will stand before the Lord in judgment.

- *Eternal death*: All those who remain impenitent to the end will suffer the just punishment for their sins: final and eternal separation from God in that place of perpetual suffering, of unremitting but unavailing remorse, and of an ever-accusing conscience—the place prepared for the devil and his angels, and expressed as a ‘lake of fire’ or similar, where God’s righteous wrath burns like fire upon the impenitent.

Atonement Essential to Forgiveness

There is one way, and one way alone, for atonement to be made for sinful human beings: a way that achieves also their reconciliation with God. This way is by the offering up of a perfect substitute to pay the penalty for sin; to cleanse the offender from his iniquity; to purge the guilty conscience, and to reconcile the offender to God through a propitiatory sacrifice that is completely acceptable to God. Without this atoning sacrifice, there can be no forgiveness of sin, no redemption, and no reconciliation with a most holy God.

In each of the passages cited below, we see that atonement for sin is essential before a person can be forgiven and reconciled to God:

Exodus 32:30-32 ESV

(30) The next day Moses said to the people,

"You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

(31) So Moses returned to the LORD and said,

"Alas, this people have sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. (32) But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written."

Leviticus 4:20 ESV

(20) "Thus shall he do with the bull. As he did with the bull of the sin offering, so shall he do with this. And the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven."

Leviticus 6:7 ESV

(7) "And the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for any of the things that one may do and thereby become guilty."

Leviticus 14:19-20 ESV

(19) The priest shall offer the sin offering, to make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. And afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. (20) And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be clean.

Hebrews 9:19-22 ESV

(19) For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, (20) saying,

"This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you."

(21) And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. (22) Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, *and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.* (emphasis added)

From these passages, we see that a mediator is essential to represent fallen and sinful mankind; to act on the sinner's behalf before God, and to provide the necessary sacrifice of atonement to God on the sinner's behalf. Without a mediator, sinful mankind cannot approach God, nor will God hear or answer his prayers—unless and until this person's sin has been atoned for and he has been reconciled to God.

In the Old Testament, God appointed priests (and especially the high priest) to act as mediators and to offer the necessary sacrifices for sin. In the New Testament, God has appointed his own Son as our Great High Priest. Unlike the priests of the Old Testament, the Lord Jesus has offered up to God one perfect sacrifice of atonement for sin that is effective forever.

We will discuss these matters on the pages that follow.

PART 3**Atonement in the Old Testament****Some Old Testament Sacrifices****The Passover or Paschal Lamb**

On the day that the LORD was about to deliver the Hebrews from their cruel bondage in Egypt, he commanded the people to slay the Passover animal, and to sprinkle its blood on the lintels and doorposts of their homes. Then, when the LORD's destroying angel saw the blood, he would *pass over* them. Thus, Israel was spared the judgment that the LORD God inflicted on the firstborn of every household in Egypt.

Thus, God's Word declares:

Exodus 12:5,12,13,23 ESV

(5) "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats..."

(12) "For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. (13) The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt..."

(23) For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

God commanded that Israel remember this deliverance throughout their generations by celebrating the Passover feast at the appointed time every year.

The paschal lamb associated with the Passover is most important. The Lord Jesus—the Lamb of God—would become the unblemished paschal (or Passover) Lamb, representing God's complete redemption of his people from former bondage or slavery in the world of sin. The Lord Jesus, however, was also the spotless Lamb of God slain as a vicarious atonement for the sins of all his people.

Offerings and Sacrifices for Sin

Without the shedding of blood, there could be no forgiveness of sin. Therefore, under the terms of the old covenant, when a person sinned unwittingly, he had to bring to the priest of God the prescribed sacrifice of atonement. Then, after the offender had laid his hands on the animal's head (representing the transference of sin and guilt to the atoning sacrifice), the priest would kill the animal and offer up that sacrifice to the LORD as a sin offering. After he had done this, the priest would throw or sprinkle the blood around the altar. Thus, unless a sacrifice was offered up for sin, and blood shed, a person could not be forgiven or restored to fellowship with God.

To this end, God commanded Israel:

Leviticus 1:1-5 ESV

- (1) The LORD called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying,
 - (2) "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them,
"When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.

(3)"If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. (4) He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. (5) Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting." (see also vv.6-13)

Leviticus 4:22-26 ESV

- (22) "When a leader sins, doing unintentionally any one of all the things that by the commandments of the LORD his God ought not to be done, and realizes his guilt, (23) or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring as his offering a goat, a male without blemish, (24) and shall lay his hand on the head of the goat and kill it in the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD; it is a sin offering. (25) Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. (26) And all its fat he shall burn on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. So the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin, and he shall be forgiven."

Leviticus 5:17-18 ESV

- (17) "If anyone sins, doing any of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, though he did not know it, then realizes his guilt, he shall bear his iniquity. (18) He shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent for a guilt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him for the mistake that he made unintentionally, and he shall be forgiven."

Unblemished Sacrifice Required

It was not sufficient to offer to God any kind of animal from the herd or from the flock. The only offering for sin that God would accept had to be completely unblemished, free from any physical defects or deformities, and of a specified age. This told the people that God would accept only that which was spotless and perfect as a sacrifice for their sins. This, in turn, told them that no human being could offer to God his life as a sin atoning sacrifice for others; for no human being on earth was spotless or perfect—as the law required all sacrifices to be. Thus, until Christ came, no was able to provide the necessary and only fully adequate atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people.

Until that time, however, God commanded the people to ensure that all their (temporary) animal sacrifices were wholly unblemished and perfectly formed animals.

Exodus 12:5 ESV

(5) "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats..."

Leviticus 1:3-4 ESV

(3) "If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. (4) He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him."

Leviticus 22:19-20 ESV

(19) "if it is to be accepted for you it shall be a male without blemish, of the bulls or the sheep or the goats. (20) You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you."

Deuteronomy 17:1 ESV

(1) "You shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God an ox or a sheep in which is a blemish, any defect whatever, for that is an abomination to the LORD your God."

PART 4**Atonement in the New Testament****Sacrifice by The Redeemer**

Under the New Testament arrangement, or the New Covenant, one sacrifice for sin alone is acceptable to God: namely, the sacrifice of his own beloved Son at the cross of Calvary. This sacrifice alone is sufficient to redeem fallen and sinful men and women to God. This sacrifice alone is sufficient to atone for sin and to cleanse the sinner from all iniquity. This sacrifice alone is able to remove the enmity between man and God, and God and man, and to reconcile redeemed men and women to God. This sacrifice alone makes it possible for the redeemed sinners to be called the children of God and to be accepted into the household and family of God. No other way of salvation exists. There is no other way under heaven whereby sinful men and women may be forgiven and reconciled to God.

To this end, God's Word says:

John 1:29 ESV

(29) The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

Acts 4:12 ESV

(12) "And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

The Perfections of The Atoning Sacrifice

But what qualified the Lord Jesus to be the sacrifice of atonement for sin?

The following was required of the typical atoning sacrifices for sin:

- They had to be without physical defect or deformity
- They had to be without blemish
- They had to be without spot or stain (corresponding to sinlessness)
- They had to be from a specific category as ordained by God (flock, herd, etc.)

In other words, they had to be as near perfect as it was possible to achieve. Furthermore, the sacrifices of atonement had to be a blood-offering: i.e., the animal had to be slain, and its blood sprinkled to symbolise the cleansing of the people and of the sanctuary and all its furniture and utensils. Without this shedding of blood, there could be no remission (or forgiveness) of sin.

These animal sacrifices, however, were very inadequate offerings. In reality, they could never take away sin. They merely symbolised the removal of sin; they covered over sin, but the removal of sin

forever was not actually achieved until God provided one final Sacrifice for sin for all time—his own Son.

Concerning this once-for-all sacrifice of atonement for sin, it is written:

Hebrews 10:11-14 ESV

(11) And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. (12) But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, (13) waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. (14) For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Unlike the animal sacrifices, the Lord Jesus was perfect; and he was (and is) perfect in the following respects:

- The life that he lived was a life of perfect, unmitigated holiness, unwavering righteousness and unflinching obedience to God his Father.
- This perfect righteousness and obedience was lived not for himself alone, but also—vicariously—on behalf of all his people.
- The life that he offered up to God as a sacrifice of atonement was a sinless, spotless, pure and holy life. Thus, the blood that he shed on the cross was the blood of the only true and perfect Man who ever lived.
- When Christ suffered and died, he did not suffer and die for any misdemeanour or offence of his own, for he was completely without fault, failing or sin. His sufferings were purely vicarious: i.e., he suffered and died, not for himself, but for others. He died in place of sinners. He bore God's just and terrible wrath and judgment on himself, so that sinners might be forgiven, reconciled to God and spared the just and eternal penalty for their sins.
- By his sufferings on the cross, and by the blood that he shed, atonement has been made fully and forever for the sins of his people. By the shedding of that blood alone, all who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ are cleansed from their sins and redeemed unto God. This was the price of our redemption: the life-blood of his own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.
- The Lord's subsequent burial in the tomb was necessary to fulfil the Scriptures concerning him; but the grave could not hold him, for death had no claim on the Lord Jesus. Death is the wages of sin, but the Lord Jesus never sinned; therefore, death could not hold him. Decay and corruption could not claim him. He must rise again.
- On the third day, the Lord arose, triumphant over sin, death, hell and the grave. Later, he ascended to glory, where now he is seated at his Father's own right hand. From this exalted station, the Lord intercedes for his people and applies to them all the benefits of redemption.

Later in this study, we will consider this atoning sacrifice more fully. Firstly, however, we will look at the sufferings that the Lord Jesus—the harmless, holy spotless Lamb of God—endured at the hands of the evil one and of sinful men.

PART 5**The Sufferings of The Redeemer****The Suffering Servant of the LORD**

The sufferings of the Lord Jesus were many and varied. Some of these are indicated below. To begin with, the sufferings of the Messiah were long foretold by the Old Testament prophets. Israel, however, failed to understand how or why their Messiah should suffer. Nevertheless, and among others, the prophet Isaiah had foretold clearly the sufferings that would be endured by the Servant of the LORD. Jewish people try to apply this prophecy to the nation of Israel herself, but only because she has misunderstood completely and misapplied this passage of God's Word:

Isaiah 52:14 (ESV)

(14) As many were astonished at you—his appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of the children of mankind—

Isaiah 53:1-12 (ESV)

(1) Who has believed what they heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? (2) For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.

(3) He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

(4) Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. (5) But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

(6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

(8) By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

(9) And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

(10) Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. (11) Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. (12) Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured

out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

Jesus' Humiliation as a Servant

As the eternal Son of God, the Lord Jesus was, and forever remains, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit. In the hallowed glory of heaven, however, the Son of God had never experienced human sufferings at first hand; nor had he been exposed to human temptations, sorrows, griefs, or even to everyday things like hunger, thirst, weariness or pain. As God, of course, he was not subject to such things.

However, in order to fulfil the will of his Father and to accomplish the work of redemption, the Son of God had to leave his place of heavenly glory, descend to earth in the form of the incarnate Lord Jesus, and take upon himself not only the form of a man (sin apart) but also the form of a servant. The eternal Word or Son of God became for his people the Servant of the LORD (or the Servant of Yahweh). This indescribable descent from heaven's immeasurable glory to abject poverty and humiliation on this earth as the Servant of the LORD was perhaps the first of the Lord Jesus' sufferings as a man.

To this end, God's Word says:

Psalms 22:6 ESV

(6) But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

Isaiah 53:2-3 ESV

(2) For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. (3) He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Zechariah 9:9 ESV

(9) Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Matthew 20:28 ESV

(28) "...even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Luke 22:27 ESV

(27) "For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves."

John 13:1-5 ESV

(1) Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. (2) During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, (3) Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, (4) rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. (5) Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (see also vv.6-20)

2 Corinthians 8:9 ESV

(9) For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.

Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)

(5) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, (6) who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Hebrews 2:9-10 ESV

(9) But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. (10) For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Tempted by Satan

Early in his public ministry, the Lord Jesus was tempted by the evil one to disobey the will of his Father. On three occasions, Satan attacked him severely and attempted to cause him to yield and to fall into sin. Nevertheless, although buffeted most severely, the Lord Jesus withstood these vile attacks, and answered the evil one by quoting from the living and abiding Word of God. On these occasions, Satan left him. Nevertheless, the Lord was greatly fatigued by these encounters with evil; and angels came and ministered unto him.

Although no other incidents of this nature are recorded in God's Word, it is certain that the evil one continued to attack and tempt the holy Son of God at every opportunity. And, being holy and completely sinless, these evil temptations would oppress his mind and soul much more severely than any other person—for all other people except the Lord Jesus have become hardened to some extent by exposure to sin and by yielding to sin.

Concerning the temptations of the Lord Jesus, God's Word says:

Matthew 4:1-11 (ESV)

(1) Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (2) And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. (3) And the tempter came and said to him,

"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread."

(4) But he answered,

"It is written,

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Deut. 8:3)

(5) Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple (6) and said to him,

"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written,

"He will command his angels concerning you,' and

"On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone." (Ps. 91:11-12)

(7) Jesus said to him,

"Again it is written,

'You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.'" (Deut. 6:16; cf. 1 Cor. 10:9)

(8) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. (9) And he said to him,

"All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

(10) Then Jesus said to him,

"Be gone, Satan! For it is written,

"You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve." (Deut. 6:13-14; 10:20)

(11) Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Ultimately, of course, the evil one made one final attempt to destroy the Holy One of God when he put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray him to the religious authorities.

Reviled by Men

Although the Lord Jesus went about doing good, helping and comforting the downtrodden and healing the sick, yet he was reviled and castigated by men. Evil men criticised and carped about every action with which they did not agree. They doubted his power and abilities. They denied his claims. They

disbelieved his message. They scorned his messengers. In these ways and more, sinful men and women caused unnecessary and unjust suffering to the sinless Lord Jesus Christ—the holy Son of God.

Matthew 12:38-42 ESV

(38) Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying,

"Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you."

(39) But he answered them,

"An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. (40) For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. (41) The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. (42) The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here."

Mark 6:2-6 (ESV)

(2) And on the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, saying,

"Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? (3) Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?"

And they took offence at him. (4) And Jesus said to them,

"A prophet is not without honour, except in his hometown and among his relatives and in his own household."

(5) And he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. (6) And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went about among the villages teaching.

Despised by the Pharisees

As if it were not bad enough that the Lord Jesus should be rejected by many of the common people, it was even worse when he was despised and rejected by the religious leaders, including the scribes and Pharisees. Together with the priests who acted as mediators, these men were reputed to be the spiritual leaders of Israel and the teachers of God's Law. Yet, almost to a man, the religious leaders despised the message of the Gospel. They denied the claims of Christ. They accused him of blasphemy for claiming (rightfully) to be the Son of God. They even accused him vilely and inexcusably of performing his miracles, signs or wonders by the power of Satan rather than that of God. If ever anyone stood on the verge of blasphemy, it was these men—as they came perilously close to blasphemy of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 12:22-32 ESV

(22) Then a demon-oppressed man who was blind and mute was brought to him, and he healed him, so that the man spoke and saw. (23) And all the people were amazed, and said,

"Can this be the Son of David?"

(24) But when the Pharisees heard it, they said,

"It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons."

(25) Knowing their thoughts, he said to them,

"Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. (26) And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? (27) And if I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. (28) But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

(29) "Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.

(30) "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

(31) "Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. (32) And whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."

John 8:47-48 ESV

(47) "Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God."

(48) The Jews answered him,

"Are we not right in saying that you are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

The Pharisees and other religious leaders did all in their power to discredit the words and works of the Lord Jesus. At every opportunity, they fulminated against him and maligned his name before the people. They slandered his character and reputation by casting aspersions and vile innuendo on the circumstances of his birth.

John 8:40-41 ESV

(40) "...but now you seek to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. This is not what Abraham did. (41) You are doing what your father did."

They said to him,

"We were not born of sexual immorality. We have one Father—even God."

The Pharisees and scribes (or experts in religious laws) sought most diligently for a means of silencing the Lord Jesus once and for all. However, following the advice of the high priest, the most effective method they could find was to frame false charges against him and have him executed at the hands of the Roman government.

Mark 2:23-24 (ESV)

(23) One Sabbath he was going through the grainfields, and as they made their way, his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. (24) And the Pharisees were saying to him,

"Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"

Mark 7:5-6 (ESV)

(5) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him,

"Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?"

(6) And he said to them,

"Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,

"This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me"

Luke 5:30-32 (ESV)

(30) And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying,

"Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

(31) And Jesus answered them,

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. (32) I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

Luke 16:13-14 (ESV)

(13) "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

(14) The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him.

Matthew 12:14-21 (ESV)

(14) But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

(15) Jesus, aware of this, withdrew from there. And many followed him, and he healed them all (16) and ordered them not to make him known. (17) This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

(18) "Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

(19) "He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets;

(20) "a bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory;

(21) "and in his name the Gentiles will hope."

(Cf. Isa 42:1-4)

Matthew 22:15 ESV

(15) Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his talk.

We should note, of course, that there were a few notable exceptions to these otherwise irreligious and ungodly men. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea—both members of the Jewish religious Council—would take no part in condemning the Lord Jesus. Indeed, Nicodemus stood up in the Sanhedrin to call for justice to be observed in respect of the Lord's case—only to be attacked for his efforts by other members of the Sanhedrin. (John 7:47-51)

Luke 23:50-51 ESV

(50) Now there was a man named Joseph, from the Jewish town of Arimathea. He was a member of the council, a good and righteous man, (51) who had not consented to their decision and action; and he was looking for the kingdom of God.

John 3:1-2 ESV

(1) Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. (2) This man came to Jesus by night and said to him,

"Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."

John 7:50-51 ESV

(50) Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them,

(51) "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?"

After the Lord's death on the cross, both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea demonstrated their faith in the Son of God by approaching Pilate to ask for the body. Then, they took the body, prepared it, and laid it in Joseph's new rock-hewn tomb.

Matthew 27:57-60 ESV

(57) When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. (58) He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. (59) And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud (60) and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.

John 19:38-41 ESV

(38) After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. (39) Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. (40) So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. (41) Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid.

Thus, the Scripture was fulfilled, which said:

Isaiah 53:9 ESV

(9) And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Jesus Foretold His Sufferings and Death

The Lord Jesus foretold clearly and repeatedly his sufferings and death at the hands of sinful men. He knew from the outset that these sufferings were part of God's plan for the redemption of lost men and women. Again, the Lord Jesus consented willingly to undergo these sufferings in order to pay the price of redemption.

Initially, however, these truths remained a mystery to his disciples, and they could not understand why the Lord Jesus needed to suffer and die. Therefore, at first, they did not accept what he was telling them about his forthcoming sufferings and death on the cross. Only after the Lord's death and subsequent resurrection did the Lord's disciples understand much more fully all that the prophets had foretold concerning the Messiah, and all that the Lord Jesus himself had told them beforehand.

Some of the Lord's words to the religious leaders and to his disciples concerning these things are quoted below:

Matthew 12:40 ESV

(40) "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Matthew 16:21 ESV

(21) From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Matthew 17:12 ESV

(12) "But I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man will certainly suffer at their hands."

Matthew 26:1-2 ESV

(1) When Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples,

(2) "You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

Matthew 26:24 ESV

(24) "The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

Mark 8:31 ESV

(31) And he began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Luke 17:24-25 ESV

(24) "For as the lightning flashes and lights up the sky from one side to the other, so will the Son of Man be in his day. (25) But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."

Luke 22:14-15 ESV

(14) And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. (15) And he said to them,

"I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer..."

The Garden of Gethsemane

Prior to his ultimate sufferings on the cross, one of the Lord's most severe periods of suffering was experienced in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives. Jesus and his disciples retired often to this secluded area to pray. However, on this particular occasion—just before the Lord was arrested and taken before the high priest and Pilate—he spent time agonising with his Father in prayer. So intense was his prayers, that the Scripture tells us that *'his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.'* (Luke 22:44 ESV)

Matthew 26:36-46 ESV

(36) Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples,

"Sit here, while I go over there and pray."

(37) And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. (38) Then he said to them,

"My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."

(39) And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying,

"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will."

(40) And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter,

"So, could you not watch with me one hour? (41) Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

(42) Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed,

"My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."

(43) And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. (44) So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.

(45) Then he came to the disciples and said to them,

"Sleep and take your rest later on. See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. (46) Rise, let us be going; see, my betrayer is at hand."

(See also Mark 14:32-42)

Luke 22:39-44 ESV

(39) And he came out and went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. (40) And when he came to the place, he said to them,

"Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

(41) And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, (42) saying,

"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done."

(43) And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. (44) And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

To date, this was probably the worst form of suffering that the Lord Jesus had ever endured. He knew that his time had come. He knew that the reason he had come into the world was now about to be fulfilled. He knew what the cost would be of suffering at the hands of sinful men during his 'trial', and he knew something of the physical agonies that he must endure on the cross.

Yet, even more than this, the holy One of God knew that the physical torments were not the worst of the agonies that he faced. Rather, he would face the indescribable agonies of being punished by his own Father—even although he had committed no offence. He knew that he would be bearing in his own body the terrible wrath of God against sin. The thought of being punished by his Father; of bearing his Father's wrath against sin, and—in consequence—of being forsaken by his Father while on the cross, must have filled his holy spotless soul with unimaginable horror and dismay. Therefore, in his agony in the Garden, he cries out almost in utter desperation, '*My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ...*' Yet, the Lord Jesus knew too that the cup of suffering could not pass from him unless he drank it. Thus, he added, '*nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.*' (Matt. 26:39)

Accepting, thus, his Father's will, the Lord Jesus stood up to face the betrayer and the band of soldiers who had now arrived on the scene. God's will and God's eternal purposes would be accomplished. In spite of the dreadful torments that lay ahead, the holy Son of God would yield to his captors.

We must remember, of course, that the Lord Jesus had at his disposal an innumerable array of holy angels. He could have called upon these holy and extremely powerful beings to come to his aid, to destroy the world and to set him free. Thus, the Lord declared:

Matthew 26:53-54 ESV

(53) "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? (54) But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?"

Had he done so, however, the Lord Jesus would never have accomplished the work of redemption; for there would have been no atonement for sin, and therefore no forgiveness and reconciliation with God for anyone. Everyone without exception would have perished in his or her sin.

Interrogated by Caiaphas and Pilate

In the Garden, the band of soldiers—accompanied by an unruly mob of civilians—seized the Lord Jesus, bound him, and led him away for interrogation by the high priest. For this purpose, the high priest had hurriedly convened a pre-trial hearing at night (and therefore, in contravention of the law).

As the sinless Son of God stood before Caiaphas, the high priest attempted to find witnesses who would testify—falsely—against the Lord Jesus (again, in contravention of the law).

Thus, it is written:

Matthew 26:56-66 ESV

(56) "But all this has taken place that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Then all the disciples left him and fled. (57) Then those who had seized Jesus led him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders had gathered. (58) And Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and going inside he sat with the guards to see the end.

(59) Now the chief priests and the whole Council were seeking false testimony against Jesus that they might put him to death, (60) but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward (61) and said,

"This man said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.'"

(62) And the high priest stood up and said,

"Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?"

(63) But Jesus remained silent. And the high priest said to him,

"I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God."

(64) Jesus said to him,

"You have said so. But I tell you, from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."

(65) Then the high priest tore his robes and said,

"He has uttered blasphemy. What further witnesses do we need? You have now heard his blasphemy. (66) What is your judgment?"

They answered,

"He deserves death."

Jesus had testified to the truth concerning himself. However, the enraged high priest would not accept the Lord's testimony because he claimed (rightly) to occupy a place and position in heaven that God alone could occupy. Thus, in his spiritual blindness and arrogance, the high priest had the audacity to accuse the holy One of God of blasphemy!

We should remember, of course, that those who are most religious outwardly (but not inwardly) are those who come closest to despising the grace of God and blaspheming the Holy Spirit of God. Like the high priest and the Pharisees, such people act inexcusably against far greater knowledge and far greater insight into spiritual matters than the more ordinary people, who are without formal religious training.

Nailed to the Cross

Now, in the hands of the cruel Roman soldiers, the Lord Jesus is taken to Calvary's mount and nailed by the soldiers to the wooden stake. This heavy pole was then upraised from the ground and placed in the earth socket prepared beforehand.

Thus, began the Lord's intense and cruel sufferings on the cross. Thus, located as he was between two criminals, he was counted among the transgressors—as had been prophesied by Isaiah. Thus, too, was the time when he experienced his greatest period of spiritual darkness over his soul, as he bore our punishment while abandoned during this time by his Father.

Concerning this public humiliation and suffering, it is written in God's Word:

Psalms 22:16-18 ESV

(16) For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—(17) I can count all my bones—they stare and gloat over me; (18) they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

Matthew 27:35 ESV

(35) And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.

Mark 15:21-27 ESV

(21) And they compelled a passerby, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross. (22) And they brought him to the place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull). (23) And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. (24) And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take.

(25) And it was the third hour when they crucified him. (26) And the inscription of the charge against him read,

"The King of the Jews."

(27) And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left.

Luke 23:33-34 ESV

(33) And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. (34) And Jesus said,

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

And they cast lots to divide his garments.

John 19:17-18 ESV

(17) ...and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. (18) There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

John 20:24-29 ESV

(24) Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. (25) So the other disciples told him,

"We have seen the Lord."

But he said to them,

"Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."

(26) Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said,

"Peace be with you."

(27) Then he said to Thomas,

"Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."

(28) Thomas answered him,

"My Lord and my God!"

(29) Jesus said to him,

"Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Acts 10:38-39 ESV

(38) ...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.
(39) And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree...

Colossians 2:14 ESV

(14) ...by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

1 Peter 2:24 ESV

(24) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

The Curse of the Cross

In addition to his humiliation and sufferings on the cross, the holy spotless Lamb of God endured also the curse of God associated with being hung on a tree. Thus, God says in his Word:

Deuteronomy 21:22-23 (ESV)

(22) "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, (23) his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance."

Galatians 3:13 ESV

(13) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written,

"Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—

Abandoned by His Father

Perhaps the greatest suffering that the Lord Jesus could endure at this time was not so much the physical agonies as the mental and spiritual agonies, or agonies of his soul, when abandoned by his own Father. Throughout the ages of eternity, the Son of God had never experienced separation from the Father in heaven. Yet, now—on the cross—the incarnate Son was experiencing absolute abandonment by the Father, while his Son endured God's wrath against sin and punishment for sin.

Thus, the Scripture says:

Psalms 22:1 ESV

(1) To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

Matthew 27:45-46 ESV

(45) Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour.
(46) And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying,

"Eli, Eli, lema [or *lama*] sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

(See also Mark 15:34)

Isaiah 53:10 ESV

(10) Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

Lamentations 1:12 ESV

(12) "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by? Look and see if there is any sorrow like my sorrow, which was brought upon me, which the LORD inflicted on the day of his fierce anger."

Buried in a Borrowed Tomb

It is written that, during his life, the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head. Likewise, in death, there was no place to lay his body.

Under normal circumstances, the Lord Jesus would have been laid to rest in a common criminals' grave. However, because of the intervention of Joseph of Arimathea who sought the Lord's body from Pilate, the Lord's body was not laid to rest in the common grave already prepared for crucified criminals ('the wicked' of Isa. 53:9), or in a tomb of his own, but in a new tomb belonging to the wealthy Joseph of Arimathea (the 'rich man' of Isa. 53:9).

Concerning these things, the Scriptures say:

Isaiah 53:9 ESV

(9) And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Matthew 27:57-60 ESV

(57) When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. (58) He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. (59) And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud (60) and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away.

John 19:38-42 ESV

(38) After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. (39) Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. (40) So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths

with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. (41) Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. (42) So because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

PART 6**One Sacrifice for Sins Forever**

The atoning sacrifice for sin, which was made by the Lord Jesus on Calvary's cross, is the only sacrifice that God accepts as the price of redemption, or for the payment and remission of sins. Again, the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus at Calvary, with the shedding of his precious blood to make atonement for sins, is the only sacrifice that remains effective forever. It is the only sacrifice capable of atoning for the sins of the redeemed from the very beginning of creation to the very end of this age. Nor will it ever need to be repeated. This was a perfect sacrifice—a perfect atonement—for the sins of the people, and it need never, and can never, be repeated at any time in the future. It is eternally efficacious.

Thus, we are told in the Word of God:

Romans 6:9-10 ESV

(9) We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. (10) For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

Hebrews 7:24-27 ESV

(24) but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. (25) Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. (26) For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. (27) He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.

Hebrews 9:11-14 ESV

(11) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) (12) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. (13) For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, (14) how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

Hebrews 9:24-26 ESV

(24) For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. (25) Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, (26) for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 9:27-28 ESV

(28) And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, (28) so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.

Hebrews 10:8-14 ESV

(8) When he said above,

"You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings"

(these are offered according to the law), (9) then he added,

"Behold, I have come to do your will."

He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. (10) And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. (11) And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. (12) But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, (13) waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. (14) For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

Redemption has been accomplished, once-for-all, on the cross. No further sacrifice for sin will ever be necessary. No further offering of blood-sacrifices to God will ever be acceptable. The Jewish priesthood has ended forever. Now, the exalted Lord Jesus alone is our only Great High Priest: the one who mediates and intercedes for his people from his heavenly throne, on the basis of the finished work that he accomplished on earth and now applies from heaven—the work of redemption.

The redeemed people of God are known as ‘priests’ or as a ‘priesthood of believers’. When used in this context, however, the term ‘priests’ or ‘priesthood’ relates not to blood-offerings, but to the offerings of praise, worship and adoration to God through the Lord Jesus Christ and in heartfelt gratitude for what he has accomplished for those whom he has redeemed unto the Father.

The Nature of this Perfect Sacrifice for Sin

But what kind of sacrifice can effect eternal redemption and reconcile sinful man to God? The sacrifice of a perfect, holy and sinless substitute alone can redeem sinful men and women and reconcile them to God. However, unlike the animal substitutes of the Old Testament, which only foreshadowed or typified the full and final removal of sin, this sacrifice actually does remove sin once-for-all. This is because our Substitute and Sacrifice of Atonement is the Lord Jesus Christ himself—the holy, sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

Concerning the Old Testament typical sacrifices, it was written:

Exodus 12:5 ESV

(5) Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats...

Concerning the Lamb of God, the Scripture says:

Isaiah 53:7 ESV

(7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

John 1:29,36 ESV

(29) The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

(36) and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said,

"Behold, the Lamb of God!"

1 Peter 1:19 ESV

(19) ...but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

Revelation 5:6,9 ESV

(6) And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth... (9) And they sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation..."

Christ, our Paschal Lamb

At the time of the Exodus, God instructed the people of Israel to prepare a lamb for sacrifice prior to their deliverance from Egypt. This was the Passover or Paschal lamb. This lamb had to be a perfectly formed specimen. The blood of the slain animal was to be sprinkled on the doorposts and lintel of the houses where the people of Israel lived, so that—upon seeing the blood—the destroying angel would *'pass over'* the homes of the Israelites. (Ex. 12:1-51)

Subsequently, the Passover was to be celebrated every year by the people of Israel, as a remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt and of the price of their redemption from slavery and sin. Each year, they were to take a lamb for the Passover sacrifice, shed its blood and roast the sacrifice whole as the Passover meal. Not a bone of the Passover sacrifice was to be broken. (Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12)

Thus, concerning the Lord Jesus—our Passover or Paschal Lamb—the Scripture says:

John 1:29 ESV

(29) The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,

"Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

John 19:32-37 ESV

(32) So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first, and of the other who had been crucified with him. (33) But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. (34) But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. (35) He who saw it has borne witness—his testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth—that you also may believe. (36) For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled:

"Not one of his bones will be broken."

(37) And again another Scripture says,

"They will look on him whom they have pierced."

1 Corinthians 5:7 ESV

(7) Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV

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

Priest and Sacrifice

The Lord Jesus was not only the Lamb of God and the sacrifice of atonement for the sins of his people. He is also the Great High Priest who acts on his people's behalf. The Lord Jesus offered up his life as a pure and perfect sacrifice for sin, and shed his precious blood for us. Thus, acting as a Priest, the Lord Jesus offered to the Father the necessary and only satisfactory sacrifice of atonement for our sins. However, the Lord Jesus was not only the Priest who *offered up the atoning sacrifice*, but he was also *the atoning sacrifice itself*. It was necessary that every priest of God had something to offer; and, as the Great High Priest of our profession, the Lord Jesus offered up himself. He yielded to God his own holy, sinless, spotless life, shedding his blood that we might be forgiven and reconciled to God.

Hebrews 5:1-6 ESV

(1) For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. (2) He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. (3) Because of this he is obligated to offer sacrifice for his own sins just as he does for those of the people. (4) And no one takes this honour for himself, but only when called by God, just as Aaron was. (5) So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him,

"You are my Son, today I have begotten you";

(6) as he says also in another place,

"You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek."

Hebrews 8:1-3 ESV

(1) Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, (2) a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the Lord set up, not man. (3) For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices; thus it is necessary for this priest also to have something to offer.

Hebrews 9:11-12, 15 ESV

(11) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) (12) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption...

(15) Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

Hebrews 9:24-26 ESV

(24) For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. (25) Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, (26) for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

PART 7**The Resurrection and Exaltation of The Redeemer****Redemption Secured**

The perfect obedience, sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus as a vicarious and atoning sacrifice for sin was essential in order to secure redemption for all his people. However, without the Lord's resurrection and exaltation to glory at the right hand of his Father, this redemption could not have been applied to any of his people. Therefore, the literal bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus was (and is) of paramount importance. Without it, there could be no justification, no salvation, and no hope for anyone.

The Lord Jesus, however, did arise from death. He was seen of many witnesses. He walked among them for approximately six weeks, and then he was seen of a number of witnesses as he ascended again into heaven.

Concerning the witnesses to the Lord's resurrection, God's Word says:

Acts 13:29-31 ESV

(29) And when they had carried out all that was written of him, they took him down from the tree and laid him in a tomb. (30) But God raised him from the dead, (31) and for many days he appeared to those who had come up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are now his witnesses to the people.

Acts 10:40-41 ESV

(40) but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, (41) not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

Acts 1:3 ESV

(3) To them he presented himself alive after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 ESV

(3) For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, (4) that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, (5) and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. (6) Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. (7) Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. (8) Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Concerning the Lord Jesus' ascension to heaven in the presence of witnesses, it is written:

Acts 1:9-11 ESV

(9) And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. (10) And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, (11) and said,

"Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

There, in heaven, the exalted and glorified Lord Jesus sits at the right hand of God, interceding for his people and applying to them all the benefits and blessings of his perfect and completed work of redemption.

To this end, the Scripture says:

Hebrews 7:22-25 ESV

(22) This makes Jesus the guarantor of a better covenant. (23) The former priests were many in number, because they were prevented by death from continuing in office, (24) but he holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever. (25) Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 9:11-12 ESV

(11) But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) (12) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Hebrews 9:15 ESV

(15) Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

Redemption Applied

The benefits and blessings of redemption are manifold; and, by the grace of God, all of these blessings are applied by the Holy Spirit to the believer's life. Among others, the following blessings of redemption are included and applied to the redeemed children of God:

1. Their effectual calling and regeneration, by the sovereign grace, love and mercy of God.
2. The grant by God of repentance and faith to all of God's elect, so that they are enabled by God's grace to respond to the call of the Spirit, to the message of the Gospel, and thus—by being made spiritually alive—are rendered capable of exercising faith in the Son of God and of embracing him willingly as their Saviour (or Redeemer) and Lord.
3. The removal of the enmity between the sinner and God, and between God and the sinner; the pacification of God with the sinner through expiation (cleansing or remission by the sacrifice

of atonement) and propitiation (appeasement and conciliation by the sacrifice of atonement). Thus, by the Sacrifice of the Lamb of God, reconciliation is effected for the redeemed of the Lord, and these individuals are brought into full fellowship with God.

4. The sinner's justification in the sight of God, through his faith, and because of the substitutionary and atoning sacrifice of God's Son.
5. The bestowal of adoption (in addition to regeneration) upon all the redeemed so that they become the beloved children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with the Son to an inheritance in glory.
6. The union of the believer with Christ, and his exaltation in Christ to the heavenly realms.
7. The sanctification of the believer from the point of his regeneration to the end of his life. This implies a call to faithful trust and obedience and to ever-increasing holiness of life.
8. The glorification of the believer, which will take place upon Christ's return or when the believer is called home to be with the Lord forever.

Scripture References to Redemption Applied

The following Scripture passages illustrate some of the above points.

(1) Effectual Calling and Regeneration

It is impossible for anyone to believe on Christ unto salvation unless and until the Holy Spirit works within that person's heart and mind to convict them of sin, to convince them of their need of redemption and to convert them to Christ. This involves effectual calling and regeneration, and it demonstrates very clearly that God—not man—must take the initiative in calling men and women to faith in Christ. Nevertheless, fallen sinful mankind remains fully responsible to God and accountable to God for all their actions, including their unbelief and rebellion against God while in their unconverted state. This is because—of their own free will—they have loved and cherished their sins more than the knowledge of God and of the righteousness that come from God above. Furthermore—and of their own free will—they have refused to seek the Lord who could have brought them to salvation.

Concerning fallen sinful mankind's unwillingness and inability to believe on Christ apart from the work of God's grace and the operations of the Holy Spirit in his heart and mind, the Scriptures say:

John 6:44-45 ESV

(44) "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. (45) It is written in the Prophets,

'And they will all be taught by God.'

Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me—"

Acts 16:14 ESV

(14) One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

Romans 9:15-16 ESV

(15) For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."

(16) So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy.

Titus 3:3-7 ESV

(3) For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. (4) But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Saviour appeared, (5) he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, (6) whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, (7) so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

As we can see from the above passages and many other passages in God's Word, it is by the grace and mercy of God alone that sinners are led to faith in Christ. These and many other passages in the Word of God make it quite plain that no sinner can repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ unless effectually called and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. However, when so called, the repentant sinner then embraces Christ by faith *freely and willingly*.

(2) Repentance and Faith

The sovereignty of God in these matters is emphasised once again in the following passages, where we see that neither repentance nor faith are acts that fallen sinful mankind can perform, or attitudes that he can express, unless the ability is given him by God. Thus, both repentance and faith are gifts of God.

Sinful mankind may express sorrow or remorse. He may acquiesce to, or believe outwardly in, a set of rules or doctrines. However, while he remains in his fallen condition, he cannot express true godly repentance leading unto salvation. Nor can he believe inwardly, from the heart, on the Lord Jesus Christ to the salvation of his soul. For the ability to exercise godly repentance and true faith in God's Son, the sinner is dependent on God's grace and mercy, and on the Holy Spirit's work in regeneration. Only then, can a person truly repent of his sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation.

The gracious nature of repentance and faith is shown from the following Scriptures:

Acts 5:31 ESV

(31) God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 11:18 ESV

(18) When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying,
"Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life."

Ephesians 2:8 ESV

(8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God...

2 Timothy 2:25b ESV

(25b) ...God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth...

(3) Reconciliation with God

In his fallen sinful condition, mankind is alienated from God and God from him. Similarly, while in his sinful condition, mankind remains permanently at enmity with God and God remains at enmity with him. Thus, all mankind outside of Christ is abiding continually under the wrath and curse of God upon sin and upon the sinner. (John 3:18,36)

Reconciliation is the means whereby sinful men and women experience forgiveness of sin and pardon from God for all the offences they have ever committed. However, reconciliation can be achieved only through the substitutionary and atoning sacrifice provided by the Lord Jesus at Calvary. There is no other way of setting aside mankind's alienation from, and enmity with God, or of removing God's alienation and enmity with mankind, except by the blood shed on the cross. However, all those who believe on Christ's substitutionary (or vicarious) and atoning sacrifice and receive him as their Saviour and Lord experience not only reconciliation with God the Father, but also everlasting peace with God through that atoning sacrifice, together with all the other blessings of redemption applied to their hearts and lives, including the promise of a place and home in the Father's presence forever.

Concerning the effects of reconciliation and peace with God, it is written:

Romans 5:1-2 ESV

(1) Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (2) Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:9-11 ESV

(9) Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. (10) For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. (11) More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 ESV

(17) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (18) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to

us the message of reconciliation. (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Ephesians 2:13-18 ESV

(13) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (14) For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility (15) by abolishing the law of commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, (16) and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. (17) And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. (18) For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

Colossians 1:19-22 ESV

(19) For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, (20) and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. (21) And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, (22) he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him...

(4) Justification

Prior to their conversion to Christ, fallen sinful men and women are abiding under the wrath and curse of God. While they remain in their sinful condition, they stand condemned by God and liable to eternal punishment. Justification is that once-for-all act whereby God pronounces or declares a repentant and believing sinner righteous in his sight; where God clothes that person with the perfect righteousness of Christ, and where the former sentence of condemnation is revoked and the believing sinner reconciled to God through the blood of the cross. Those whom God has justified through their union with Christ Jesus can never again be condemned. Again, those whom God justifies are also being sanctified by the Spirit of grace and of holiness.

Concerning God's gift of justification, it is written:

Romans 1:16-18 ESV

(16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (17) For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (18) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

Romans 3:21-26 ESV

(21) But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— (22) the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (25) whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. (26) It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 4:1-3 ESV

(1) What then shall we say was gained by Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh? (2) For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. (3) For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:23-25 ESV

(23) But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, (24) but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, (25) who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

Romans 5:15-21 ESV

(15) But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. (16) And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. (17) If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. (18) Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. (19) For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (20) Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, (21) so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

(5) Adoption

All those whom God calls into fellowship with his Son receive the gift of adoption into the family and household of God. Consequently, believers become the children of God both by regeneration (the new birth) and by adoption. As children of God's family, believers are also counted as heirs of God and of his inheritance, and joint-heirs with God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Believers become God's children *by grace*. The Lord Jesus is eternally God's Son *by nature*.

Concerning the fact that believers are the adopted children of God, the Scriptures say:

Romans 8:14-23 ESV

(14) For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (15) For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" (16) The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (18) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. (19) For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. (20) For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. (23) And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

Galatians 3:26-29 ESV

(26) for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. (27) For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (28) There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (29) And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 4:4-7 ESV

(4) But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, (5) to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (6) And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (7) So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Ephesians 1:3-14 ESV

(3) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love (5) he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (6) to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. (7) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, (8) which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (9) making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ (10) as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (11) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, (12) so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. (13) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

(6) Union with Christ

Those whom God's Spirit calls to faith in Christ are then united with Christ in the heavenly realms. Spiritually, the believer is raised up to where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Each redeemed child of God is bonded forever to Christ and in Christ. Because of this inseparable spiritual union, nothing in heaven or on earth can harm the believer's soul, nor can anything or anyone ever remove the believer from their union with the Father and with the Son. Through their faith in Christ Jesus, accompanied by their obedience to him and their perseverance in the faith, the believer remains eternally secure.

One of the reasons for our union in Christ Jesus is that we may fulfil God's eternal purposes for us in and through his Son, and that we may honour the Lord in our lives. Thus, God's Word says:

Matthew 5:13-16 ESV

(13) "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

(14) "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. (15) Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light

to all in the house. (16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

John 17:18-23 ESV

(18) “As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. (19) And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

(20) “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, (21) that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

(22) “The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, (23) I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”

Ephesians 1:4 ESV

(4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love...

Ephesians 2:4-6 ESV

(4) But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— (6) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Ephesians 2:10 ESV

(10) For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Philippians 3:9 ESV

(9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

(7) Sanctification

Sanctification is that process whereby those whom God has regenerated and justified are then indwelt, sealed unto God, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit operating through the Word of God. Sanctification is an ongoing and life-long process, and culminates ultimately in the believer’s translation and glorification. No one is ever completely sanctified, or made perfect, in this life; however, throughout his life, the believer must strive toward the goal of righteousness.

Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ within him—the Holy Spirit who sanctifies every true child of God—does not belong to Christ; nor does anyone who does not bring forth consistently the fruit of the Spirit in his life.

John 17:17 ESV

(17) “Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.”

1 Corinthians 1:30 ESV

(30) He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom and our righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

Ephesians 5:26-27 ESV

(26) ...that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (27) so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Philippians 3:12-14 ESV

(12) Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. (13) Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, (14) I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 2:13 ESV

(13) But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth.

1 Peter 1:2 ESV

(2) ...according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood: May grace and peace be multiplied to you.

(8) Resurrection, Translation and Glorification

The redeemed believer is a stranger and pilgrim on this earth; although, he is responsible to God for fulfilling the work to which the Lord has called him. Ultimately, however, the believer's home and citizenship is in heaven, where the Lord Jesus has prepared a place for all his own.

However, before they can enter the majestic presence of God in heaven, those believers who have died must be raised by the power of God, translated or endowed with a new spiritual and eternal body, and glorified or perfected finally so that they are fully prepared and equipped for entering into the presence of the most high and holy God and of Jesus Christ his Son. This will happen at the second coming of the Lord Jesus in his glory. The dead in Christ will rise; and, together with those still alive at the coming of the Lord Jesus, they will be caught up to be with the Lord forever.

Concerning the resurrection, translation and glorification of the children of God, the Scriptures say:

John 14:1-3 ESV

(1) "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also."

1 Corinthians 15:35-58 ESV

(35) But someone will ask,

"How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?"

(36) You foolish person! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. (37) And what you sow is not the body that is to be, but a bare kernel, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. (38) But God gives it a body as he has chosen, and to each kind of seed its own body. (39) For not all flesh is the same, but there is one kind for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. (40) There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is of one kind, and the glory of the earthly is of another. (41) There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory.

(42) So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. (43) It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. (44) It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (45) Thus it is written,

"The first man Adam became a living being";

the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. (46) But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. (47) The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. (48) As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. (49) Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

(50) I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

(51) Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, (52) in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. (53) For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality. (54) When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

(55) "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"

(56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. (57) But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (58) Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 ESV

(13) But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. (14) For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. (15) For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. (16) For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. (17) Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. (18) Therefore encourage one another with these words.

PART 8**The Redeemed Children of God****The Price of our Redemption**

The price of our redemption extends far beyond human computation or measurement. Redemption is priceless. It involved the humiliation, suffering, sacrifice and death of the holy sinless Lord Jesus Christ. It meant that he who had no sin had to become sin for us. It meant that the eternal Son of God had to leave the realms of glory to come down to this earth to act as the only perfect sacrifice for sin.

All of this, and much more, contributed toward the immeasurable cost of our redemption. All we can say is that this cost was paid, and paid in full, by the holy spotless Lamb of God offering up himself as a once-for-all perfect sacrifice of atonement for the sins of all his people throughout the ages. Christ paid for our salvation, and the Father was fully satisfied with the work that the Lord Jesus accomplished during his life and on the cross at Calvary, as the only perfect and acceptable Substitute for sinners.

Concerning the price or cost of redemption, the Scriptures say:

Psalms 49:7-8 ESV

(7) Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, (8) for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice...

We should not also the following points regarding the cost of redemption:

The eternal Son of God took upon himself human form—without sin—and humbled himself for our sakes, as part of the cost of our redemption:

Philippians 2:6-8 ESV

(6) who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

The Lord Jesus shed his blood as part of the cost of our redemption:

Matthew 20:28 ESV

“... even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Matthew 26:28 ESV

(28) “...for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

The sinless Lord Jesus became sin for us (i.e., he incurred our legal liability and judgment, while remaining sin-free himself) as part of the cost of our redemption:

2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV

(21) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

1 Peter 2:24 ESV

(24) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

God the Father placed his only beloved Son under a curse as part of the cost of our redemption:

Galatians 3:13 ESV

(13) Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"—

The holy Son of God offered up his righteous and perfect life once-for-all, shedding his own precious blood, as a part of the price of our redemption:

Hebrews 9:25-26 ESV

(25) Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, (26) for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

1 Peter 1:18-19 ESV

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

More examples could be added. However, the foregoing shows something of the nature and cost of our redemption. These examples demonstrate very clearly why redemption could never have been achieved by animal sacrifices, or even by the sacrifice of a (sinful) human being. God required and demanded a perfect sacrifice of atonement for sin. This perfect sacrifice alone could pay the price of sin, and reconcile men and women to God. And this perfect sacrifice could be provided only by the sinless spotless Lamb of God.

However, in order to provide the necessary sacrifice to God, the Lord Jesus had to live a totally righteous life on his own behalf and also vicariously, on behalf of sinners. Then, he had to lay down that life voluntarily as a once-for-all sacrifice of atonement to God—not for himself, but vicariously, as the only acceptable and perfect Substitute for sinful men and women.

Clearly, then, no amount of animal sacrifices could ever have paid the price of redemption, propitiation and reconciliation with God. Similarly, no human being could ever have paid the price of redemption. This is because every human being in the world has inherited Adam's sinful nature and therefore is far from perfect. However, because he was conceived directly by the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary, the incarnate Son of God was born without inheriting original sin. He—and he alone—was sinless perfect Man. He—and he alone—was the only Man fully able to make the necessary sacrifice for sin.

The Implications of our Redemption

God has redeemed his people for a specific purpose: That purpose is to fulfil his will in and for their lives, and to live as a holy and godly people while on this earth, in preparation for and in anticipation of their future blessedness with God in heaven.

Thus, God's Word declares:

Romans 12:1-2 ESV

(1) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Philippians 2:13 ESV

(13) for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Colossians 4:12 ESV

(12) Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

1 Thessalonians 4:1-3 ESV

(1) Finally, then, brothers, we ask and urge you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, that you do so more and more. (2) For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. (3) For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 ESV

(16) Rejoice always, (17) pray without ceasing, (18) give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Hebrews 10:35-36 ESV

(35) Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. (36) For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

1 Peter 4:1-2 ESV

(1) Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, (2) so as to live for the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for human passions but for the will of God.

1 Peter 4:19 ESV

(19) Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

No one who has been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and at such incalculable cost, can continue to live as he did prior to his conversion. By virtue of his redemption, he has been born again to a new life and to newness of life in Christ Jesus. Therefore, he must live unto God in righteousness, holiness and honour, and he must honour and glorify the Lord Jesus in all that he says and does.

Romans 15:5-6 ESV

(5) May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, (6) that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 ESV

(18) Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. (19) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 Peter 4:16 ESV

(16) Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

As part of the application of redemption, the believer has received God's Holy Spirit to indwell him. By the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit within him, the believer is sealed unto God for all eternity, and is being sanctified unto God from moment to moment and from day to day. Thus, he is being fashioned ever increasingly into the likeness of Christ his Redeemer. Ultimately, when he sees the Lord Jesus face to face, the believer will become like Christ (insofar as a glorified human being can resemble his Lord and Creator).

From this, it follows that the believer must endeavour to live a life that is honouring to his Father in heaven, and to the Lord Jesus who loved him and yielded up his own life to provide an eternal redemption for all of his blood bought people—the redeemed of the Lord.

2 Corinthians 1:20-22 ESV

(20) For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. (21) And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, (22) and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Ephesians 1:12-14 ESV

(12) so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. (13) In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4:30 ESV

(30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

The Practical Outworking of our Redemption

The redeemed people of God are called to be a holy people and a separated people—holy unto the Lord and separated from all moral and spiritual contamination or impurity. However, God’s redeemed people have not been called to be an isolated people, living their lives aloof from society or with little regard for others in the world. The Lord Jesus was holy, spotless, and sinless; completely without fault or blemish in his character or conduct. Nevertheless, the same holy Son of God came into this world to save sinners. To this end, the Lord Jesus met with and mixed with sinners. He ate and drank with them. He attended to their needs, morally, spiritually, physically and emotionally/psychologically. Yet, although he moved among sinful mankind, their sin never contaminated his holy Person. He remained holy, pure, undefiled, and separated from sinners: i.e., separated from sinners morally and spiritually—not physically. The sinless Lord Jesus did not isolate himself from sinners, nor was he unconcerned with the everyday needs of sinful men and women.

As the Lord’s holy and redeemed people, we must endeavour to follow the Lord’s example. We must separate ourselves (morally and spiritually) from the sin of the world, but we must not isolate ourselves from the needs of the world or from people in need. We must endeavour to live holy and godly lives that are well pleasing to God, but we must not turn our backs on our neighbour in need. By God’s grace, we have been forgiven. Yet, we must never look down on those who have not (or have not yet) experienced God’s love and mercy. God has put us into this world for a purpose, and one purpose is that we should be the salt and light of the world: salt to preserve from the corruptions of sin, and light to bear witness to the truth of God’s love, mercy and grace as well as his truth, justice and holiness.

Nevertheless, we are a ‘called out’ people. Although we must be concerned practically and spiritually for the unregenerate people of the world, we must always remember that this world is not our home. We are pilgrims here. Our citizenship is in heaven, where the Lord has prepared for all his people their true and everlasting home in the presence of his Father and of the holy angels. Yet, while we remain on earth, we must remain true and faithful to the one who called us in his mercy and grace and who made us his own. Our task here is to be faithful to the Lord and to the work that he has given us to do. Let us then press on toward the mark, striving diligently to advance the work of Christ and his kingdom in the midst of an unbelieving and hostile world, while at the same time reaching out to those in need.

Conclusion

This, then, represents a mere outline of the nature of that redemption which was required to effect forgiveness and reconciliation with God, together with the need of a perfect or sinless sacrifice of atonement to pay the price of redemption. Full and final atonement has been provided by the Lord Jesus Christ—the Lamb of God. He alone takes away the sin of the world. He alone acted as our once-for-all sacrifice for sin, and he alone now sits exalted at God’s right hand in heaven, mediating and interceding for all his people on earth.

This same Lord Jesus has gone to prepare a place in glory for all his redeemed and sanctified children. One day, he will return in glory to raise from the dead those who have died in him and to translate those who remain alive at his coming. Then, in their resurrected and glorified bodies, all the redeemed children of God will meet in their eternal home in the presence of the Father. There, the redeemed of the Lord will worship, praise and honour the one who loved them and who gave himself for them. There, they will adore the Lord their God who sent his Son to purchase a people for himself, to set them apart as his church, and to present that church to the Father cleansed by the atoning blood and sanctified by the Holy Spirit and by the Word from every spot, stain or wrinkle.

Ephesians 5:25-27 ESV

(25b) ...as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, (26) that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, (27) so that he might present the church to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

Revelation 5:1-14 ESV

(1) Then I saw in the right hand of him who was seated on the throne a scroll written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals. (2) And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice,

"Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"

(3) And no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or to look into it, (4) and I began to weep loudly because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or to look into it. (5) And one of the elders said to me,

"Weep no more; behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has conquered, so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals."

(6) And between the throne and the four living creatures and among the elders I saw a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain, with seven horns and with seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. (7) And he went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who was seated on the throne. (8) And when he had taken the

scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. (9) And they sang a new song, saying,

"Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, (10) and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth."

(11) Then I looked, and I heard around the throne and the living creatures and the elders the voice of many angels, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, (12) saying with a loud voice,

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing!"

(13) And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying,

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honour and glory and might forever and ever!"

(14) And the four living creatures said,

"Amen!"

and the elders fell down and worshipped.

