

APPLYING TRUTH TO LIFE

Grace Gatherings

THEOLOGY NIGHTS | FEBRUARY 28, 2024

GRACE CHURCH
WILLIAMSBURG

Question 13

Provide an explanation of and the biblical basis for the doctrine of **substitutionary atonement**, explaining the implications of this doctrine for human **guilt** over sin. Relate your understanding of this to the concept of **false** guilt.

Another way of addressing this doctrine is to ask *what did Jesus' death on the cross **accomplish** for those whom God **chose for salvation** before the foundation of the world? Why was the cross necessary?*

Our emphasis in the question we are dealing with concerns **the cross and human guilt**.

Question 13

The Old Testament sacrificial system **foreshadowed** Christ's sacrifice in our place.

- **Leviticus 16:** Two goats were used as **substitutes** for bearing the sins of God's people.

First goat: the **sin** offering. It was killed, and its blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat of the ark of the covenant. The life of animals and humans is in the blood; therefore, spilling the blood was the offering of a life as the **payment** due for sin—**death**.

Second goat: the **scapegoat** (the *Azazel*, or escape goat). The high priest laid his hands on this goat to symbolize the goat bearing the sins of the people, then it was released to carry their sins into the wild and away from the people. The sin was **removed**.

Question 13

- The **scapegoat** illustrates what was accomplished by the first goat. By the first goat's life being offered up as a **sin** offering by the shedding of its blood, the second goat being **sent away** pictures that the sin offering of the first goat **carries the people's sins away** (atones for and satisfies) so that their sins are no longer a barrier between the people and God.
- But the value of these rituals was in what they **pointed** to.
- The people were justified and forgiven based not on the blood of these animals, but by **believing** in the promise of God for the **One** Who would be the **fulfilment** of what these animal sacrifices pointed to. Substitution was **central** to Old Testament worship and sacrifice.

Question 13

- **Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12**
- But the blood of bulls and goats cannot and was never meant to fully atone, forgive, or save humans from sin. The Old Testament sacrifices outwardly **symbolized** forgiveness and emphasized fellowship with God.
- “Animal sacrifices are insufficient to fully and finally atone for the sins of human beings—only a human life can fully atone for a human life.” (*John MacArthur*)
- This is why we have Isaiah prophesying about God sending His **Servant**, a **Person**, who will justify the many by **bearing their iniquities**—once for all.

Question 13

- **Hebrews 10:1-18**
- “In the Old Testament sacrificial system, God was saying to the people of Israel, ‘You have committed capital offenses against Me, and the law requires your death, but I will accept **in the place** of your death the death of a substitute, **symbolized** by the death of animals.’” *(R.C. Sproul)*
- What is each of us **guilty** of before God? What is the **true** guilt we each bear as we stand before God our Creator?
 - **Galatians 3:10-14**
 - Breaking God’s law and being **cursed/condemned** for it. But Jesus has **redeemed** us from this curse of the law as lawbreakers by **becoming a curse for us**.

Question 13

This brings us to **two critical components** or elements of Christ's atoning sacrifice for us—**expiation** and **propitiation**.

Question 13

Substitutionary = Christ bearing **our** penalty for **our** sins in **our** place.

Atonement = *At-one-ment*—it involves a **payment** to make **amends** for a debt. Jesus makes amends to God for **our sin debt** (death) we owe to God.

Propitiation = “Averting/satisfying God’s **anger** by an **offering**.”

Expiation = “...denotes the covering, putting away, or rubbing out of sin so that it no longer constitutes a **barrier** to friendly fellowship between man and God.” (*J.I. Packer*)

Question 13

Propitiation

- Romans 3:21-26; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:1-2; 1 John 4:8-10
- To propitiate means that Jesus is said to **satisfy** the divine justice and thus **appease** God's displeasure with, or wrath against, sinners.
- Jesus is our divine "**wrath-quencher**" (*Packer*) Who turns away the wrath of God and makes God **propitious** (favorable) toward us. This is the **heart** of the doctrine of Christ's atonement for us.

Question 13

Expiation

- “*ex*” = from or out of.
- It refers to the **removal of guilt** from someone. Jesus dealt with the guilt of our sin by becoming sin for us and by living a sinless/righteous life, a righteousness which is imputed/credited to us by faith.
- Expiation is the “covering or the putting away of sin so that it no longer constitutes a barrier to friendly fellowship between God and man.” (*Packer*)
- Propitiation is all that expiation is, and **more**—propitiation goes further to satisfy God’s holy, righteous anger against us as sinners.

Question 13

- The guilt that we suffer under is real and well-deserved, but Jesus bore that guilt in our place and suffered the full anger of God against our guilt, so that we could be free of the blame, shame, penalty, and power of sin over us.
- 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10; Romans 8:1

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- **False guilt** concerns the way sinners seek to **dodge** the reality of their **true** guilt before God and regarding others. At its core, false guilt denies the reality of **personal culpability**—of being **blameworthy** and **personally** responsible for their own sins.
- People suffer from the guilt of their own sins and from sins others do to them which **combine** to produce feelings of shame, exposure, vulnerability, and the need to hide and protect ourselves from what we see as a threat.
- Jesus offers us His forgiveness which brings us **freedom** from this sinful cycle of guilt and its **enslaving** effects (Colossians 1:13-14).

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