

1 Peter 2:24

Many people have the philosophy that God is so easy going, kindhearted, loving and generous He is willing to let me into heaven, unless I say or do something so unreasonable that it convinces Him otherwise. **Ephesians 2:8-9**, “*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*”

1. Willing Substitution

There isn't anyone else except Christ Jesus who could be our substitute to take away our sins. Peter is referencing the Old Testament Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur). Where once a year, the High Priest confessed the sins of the people over the head of a goat laying his hands on the head of that goat as if to signify the laying on the head of that goat the sins of the people. It was led away to wander and die alone in the wilderness; it symbolically bore the sins of the people in its body (**Leviticus 16:7-10; 21-22**).

Typified by that innocent animal who carried the sins of the people away, Jesus Christ, the innocent One, had laid upon Him the sins of the whole world and He carried it away, “*and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world*” (**1 John 2:2**).

Jesus also fulfilled the symbol of the innocent Lamb being killed on the Day of Passover. Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, never solved anything permanently. The High Priest had to do the sacrifice again the next year and every year. Hebrews explains, “*But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year*” (**Hebrews 10:3**).

The next verse says it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, “*For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins*” (**Hebrews 10:4**).

Verse 1 in this same chapter of Hebrews says that the sacrifices were a *shadow* of the good things to come. The good thing to come is Jesus Christ, the One true sacrifice as described in verses 10 and 12, ¹⁰“*By that will [God's will] we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*” ¹²“*But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God.*”

“Atonement” in the Hebrew language, means “*covering*,” not “*canceling*.” So the leading away of a goat and the sacrifice of a lamb could not permanently take away sin. Every year, the sins of the people were recited with the same ritual.

“*But the debt of sin simply mounted ever higher, year after year; it was covered and carried forward in anticipation that one day the symbol would be replaced by the substance, the ritual of repeated atonement by the reality of permanent and final atonement.*” [John Phillips]

“*When you were dead in your transgressions . . . He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us . . . and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross*” (**Colossians 2:14**).

2. A Positive Commitment

Some who do not understand salvation as a gift of grace believe the debt should be paid back by a life of positive commitment to Christ; however, that's not what positive commitment means. We can never repay God for what was done on the cross as payment and removal of our sins. The Apostle makes a recommendation in the middle of verse 24 that we die to sins and live for righteousness – that's the positive commitment.

From the text and the tense of the verb in vs. 24, “*... so that we might die to sin*” can be translated literally, *so that we, having parted with those sins.*”

The verb rendered “*might die*” occurs only here in the New Testament, its root meaning is “*to have no part in*” or “*to be separated from.*” This verse is looking back at the moment of our regeneration by means of trust in the cross-work of Christ.

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3. Growing Anticipation

The word Peter uses here for “wounds” is used as a general reference, a synonym for all the suffering, pain, and all the agony that Jesus suffered as He died. The healing mentioned here is spiritual, not physical.

However, there is the point to consider that the atonement ultimately brings every believer to heaven where a new body awaits them. A body without sickness, without pain, without disease, and without death (*Revelation 21:4 & in chapter 22*).

Peter is delivering the gospel here, the news of Christ’s death on the cross and payment for our sin, this is the good news of forgiveness, not good health.

“Your forgiveness will last a lot longer than your health, because Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sins, not to write a prescription for your sickness. “He was made sin for us, not disease.” [John MacArthur]

When the resurrected Lord appeared to His disciples, Thomas missed the meeting, and when they told him that Jesus had appeared to them he didn’t believe them. He said, *“Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and [then] put my hand into His side, I will not believe.”* Thomas demands empirical evidence.

The next time Jesus appears He invites Thomas to reach out and touch the nail prints in His hands and the scar from the spear in His side, revealing the shocking revelation that Jesus has kept His scars.

When Israel is reconstituted in repentance during the Tribulation and then as they see the Lord descending, with us, to establish His kingdom, Zechariah the prophet highlights this very issue when he quotes the returning Messiah who says, *“They will look upon Me whom they pierced.” (Zechariah 12:10)*

Our Savior has chosen to keep His wounds to display them throughout all of eternity; even though by His atoning work and divine grace He has chosen in Heaven one day, to wipe all our wounds away. We will be reminded forever, every time we look at Jesus, by His wounds we are forever healed.

That is what we’re celebrating today as we partake of the Lord’s Supper, His atoning work and divine grace whereby we are healed by His wounds, and justified by His blood that covers our sins.

Application:

When Jesus died, He bore the accumulated debt of the sins of the whole world. What is the significance of that reality for those who believe the gospel?

In what ways will you express your gratitude and praise for Christ’s sacrifice on your behalf in how you live your life?

Who do you know that needs to hear the gospel? Look for an opportunity to share with that person this week.