

Leviticus 1:1–5; Exodus 21:28–30
What is Atonement and Why do we Need It?
June 17, 2012

Sermon Outline

Notes:

I. Children’s Overview: “A Law about an Ox”

Key Idea

God’s grace toward us is evident in both his willingness to accept a substitute as a ransom and in his sending his son to pay that ransom.

II. What is Atonement and Why do we Need It? *

A. What is “Atonement”?

From the meaning of *kōper* “ransom,” the meaning of *kāpar* can be better understood. It means “to atone by offering a substitute.” The great majority of the usages concern the priestly ritual of sprinkling of the sacrificial blood thus “making an atonement” for the worshipper. There are **forty-nine instances of this usage in Leviticus alone** and no other meaning is there witnessed. The verb is always used in connection with the removal of sin or defilement, except for Gen 32:20; Prov 16:14; and Isa 28:18 where the related meaning of “**appease by a gift**” may be observed. It seems clear that this word aptly illustrates the theology of reconciliation in the OT. The life of the sacrificial animal specifically symbolized by its blood was required in exchange for the life of the worshipper.† (emphasis mine)

Leviticus 17:11

¹¹ *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.*

* I am indebted to **Jay Sklar** from Covenant Theological Seminary. The title & basic content for this sermon I took from one of the main headings in his lecture on “The Atonement”. This lecture was from a 7 part series which you can find on-line. Search for “Worldwide Classroom” to find their website.

† Harris, R. L. (1999). 1023 כִּפֶּר. In R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr. & B. K. Waltke, Ed.) (electronic ed.) (453). Chicago: Moody Press.

Leviticus 1:3–5

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.

B. Why do we Need It?

1. Sin is Calls for God’s Judgment (e.g. The Flood; The Golden Calf)
2. Eternal Death is the Right Judgment

Romans 1:18, 29–32

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness *suppress the truth*. ...

²⁹ They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹ foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. ³² *Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die,* they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

Revelation 21:8

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 sulfur, which is the *second death*.”

III. Atonement is God's Gracious Way of Salvation

A. The Blood of Jesus is Our True Ransom

Mark 10:45

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

Revelation 5:9

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...

B. The Death of the Sacrifices/Jesus Teaches Us...

1. Sin must be punished
2. God's grace, He is *willing to accept* a substitute (a ransom)
3. God's gracious *provision* of a substitute!
4. Through God's substitute our sins are paid for!
5. Through God's substitute we can draw near to God and receive life not judgment!

“...the atonement is vast and deep.” †

† Wood, D. R. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1996). *New Bible dictionary* (3rd ed.) (104). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press.