

# ATONEMENT

The forgiveness of sin should be on the mind of every person in the world. Without forgiveness there is *no* hope, no safety for the soul, no future, no salvation, and no happiness. Because of sin, man is separated from God, for God has nothing to do with wickedness. "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, So that He will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2 NKJV). It is through the act of atonement that mankind can receive the forgiveness of sins.

What is atonement? It is the process of bringing those who are alienated into unity. It is the offering for sin that brings about reconciliation to God. "The act by which God restores a relationship of harmony and unity between Himself and human beings. The word can be broken into three parts which express this great truth in simple but profound terms: 'at-one-ment.' Through God's atoning grace and forgiveness, we are reinstated to a relationship of at-one-ment with God" (*Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers). What can be learned about this wonderful word, atonement?

Atonement reveals the love of God for mankind. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Man is reconciled to God by the death of Jesus. The perfect justice of God demands satisfaction for sin. It is brought about by the perfect gift of the sinless Lamb of God, Christ Jesus (John 1:29). The death of Jesus shows the full measure of God's love for mankind.

The death of Jesus teaches us about the seriousness of sin and the universality of sin. "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). This is not predetermination of sin as many advance today in the religious world. It is a choice made by man to disobey God. Because man sins, he will receive the wages of his action. "For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ *Jesus our Lord*" (Rom. 6:23). The fact is that man is unable to deal with sin; it took Jesus' death to provide atonement, so man can be 'at-one-ment' with God. There is no need of any more sacrifices because Jesus offered His blood for man, once for all. "Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12).

The only way to receive the blessing of atonement is to be in Christ. Only those in Christ Jesus are saved. There is no salvation without being in Christ. How does one get into Christ? What does the Bible teach on the subject? The apostle Paul said, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Being baptized into Christ for the remission of sins is the only way to be 'at-one-ment' with God the Father. **Yes**, baptism saves! It is not a work of man, but of God. We are "Buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). Jesus died to provide atonement for the sins of mankind, so man can have a new life in unity with God. It is through baptism that man can enjoy this new life. The atonement that God has provided for all mankind is a wonderful blessing. Let us all celebrate God's forgiveness by humbling ourselves in obedience to His Word!

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## BELVEDERE BEACON

"Ye are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)

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## Every Christian Is a Member of the Church of Christ

There are those today who claim that the Bible teaches that there are Christians who are not members of the church of Christ. But I have no hesitation in affirming that the Bible teaches that every person who is a Christian *is* a member of the church of Christ. This means, obviously, that I am affirming that the Bible teaches that there are no Christians who are not members of the church of Christ. The church of Christ is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18). The saved are those who have been reconciled unto God, and those who have been reconciled unto God are members of the body (church) of Christ (Eph. 2:13-18). The matter is really just that simple, but in the light of the importance of the matter, let us say a bit more about it.

The Bible teaches that salvation is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10). To be in Christ is to be in His church (Gal. 3:26-27; 1 Cor. 12:13; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 20:28; 2:38; Eph. 1:7). The Bible teaches that it is impossible for one to "cross the line" into salvation without "crossing the line" into Christ. The Bible also teaches that it is impossible for one to "cross the line" into Christ without "crossing the line" into the church.

The crucial relation of the church to salvation is seen in the statement, "And the Lord added [Greek imperfect "was adding"] to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). The English Revised Version, in an excellent treatment, translates Acts 2:47 in this way: "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved" (Greek present participle).

In short, the Bible teaches that there are no Christians outside of the church for which Jesus died. When one obeys the Gospel, being baptized (as a penitent believer) in the name of Christ (that is, by His authority), the Lord adds him to the church. He never fails to do this (cf. Acts 2:41, 47; Cor. 12:13).

Thomas Warren  
Deceased

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

#### SUNDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 10.00 am.

Morning Worship 11.00 am.

Evening Worship 6.00 p.m.

#### WEDNESDAY:

Bible Classes for all ages 7.00 p.m.

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**IS TEN COMMANDMENT LAW STILL BINDING? - PART SIX**

In our first article in this series we noted how the authors of the book dealt with Acts 20:7 -- wherein they ignored the context that shows that the disciples met together on the first day of the week for the purpose of observing the Lord's Supper. Their reference to Acts 20:7 is found in the sixth chapter of the book, in which they seek to show that the Lord's Day is not the first day of the week -- but has reference to the seventh day Sabbath.

Early in this chapter the authors state, "Did you know there is no Bible reference to the *first day of the week* as being the Lord's Day? Not one single scripture makes that connection." What the authors do not admit to is the

fact that there is no Bible reference to the *Sabbath day* being the Lord's Day. There is only one passage of Scripture that uses the expression "the Lord's day"--Revelation 1:10--which reads: "*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.*" John does not state specifically what day he is referencing; such can only be determined from a study of the Scriptures. The authors make the *assumption* that it has reference to the Sabbath, and thus spent a large part of the chapter berating those who do not observe the seventh day Sabbath--even though they have not offered any proof of their case.

They do make an assertion--for which they offer no proof --when they state: "In the Roman Empire, the first day of the week (Sunday) was called 'the Lord's [Emperor's] day' because Sunday was the day the emperor received his treasury payments. Sun -worshipping pagans also celebrated Sunday as 'the venerable day of the Sun.'" Such, even if true, do **NOT** prove their case. They further state, "The Romans had banished John to the lonely island of Patmos for his testimony of Jesus. Do you think John would acknowledge Sunday, the *Lord's Day* honoring the Roman Emperor or the *Day of the Sun*, as the day of his Lord?" Thus, based on their assumption and without proof, the authors contend that John kept the Sabbath. Much of the rest of the chapter deals with references to the Sabbath both from the Old and New Testaments, but not **one** of them shows Christians engaging in Christian worship on the Sabbath. They do, however, give scant attention to passages mentioning the first day of the week.

There are eight passages that mention the first day of the week; five of these are Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1 and John 20:1. As the writers *correctly* state, these: "correspond with the day when Christ's women disciples returned to the tomb on the resurrection morning." It is interesting to note that they do acknowledge that the first day of the week was "the resurrection morning."

The next verse they reference is John 20:19. They write, "We find the trembling disciples of Christ assembled on the first day of the week, resurrection Sunday. Following the crucifixion, they were huddled together behind closed doors barred shut for fear of the Jews. How could anyone believe this was a worship service?" They give no reference to context. However, context shows that Thomas was not present on that occasion but was on the next occasion, a week later (John 20:24). Why were they assembled on the *first day of the week* and **NOT** the Sabbath two weeks in a row? Jesus appeared to the disciples on *both* occasions when they were assembled on the first day of the week, yet He gives no reprimand for their being together at that time rather than the Sabbath.

The second reference is Acts 20:7. We dealt with this passage in our first article in the series. There we noted that, again, the book's authors ignore the context. The context shows that while Paul was in a hurry to get to Jerusalem, he waited a whole week before meeting with the disciples to "break bread." If the Lord's Supper (breaking of bread) could have been partaken of on any day, why did Paul not call the brethren together after he arrived so that he could have continued his journey? Again, if the Christians were supposed to be keeping the Sabbath, why is there no mention of them meeting on the Sabbath -- or a reprimand from Paul because they were meeting on the first day of the week and not the seventh day Sabbath?

The last verse the authors reference is I Corinthians 16:2. In commenting on this verse they write: "In that verse, Paul instructs the brethren to systematically store up a collection for the benefit of famine-stricken believers in Jerusalem, by *laying aside* something on the first day of the week." Why--on the "first day of the week,"--do the authors not suggest a reason as to *why* it was to be the first day of the week and not another? They imply that such were private collections in the homes of the brethren. They do indicate that Paul desired the contribution to be ready, but ignore that he wrote: "*that there be no gatherings when I come.*" If the laying by in store was done privately, it would not be ready when Paul came but would have to be gathered up. Furthermore, the previous verse uses the word "collection," which clearly implies that the funds were to be gathered into one place-- not a multitude of "collections" in the homes of brethren. If the disciples were meeting on the seventh day Sabbath, why did Paul not state that the laying by in store was to be done on that day? If they were meeting on the first day of the week, to break bread-- as the brethren at Troas were -- then to have such done on the first day of the week makes perfect sense.

The authors conclude the section by asking: "Do you see any evidence that God transferred His holy day from Saturday to Sunday?" Such is the wrong question, since the Sabbath has been nailed to the cross along with the rest of the Old Testament Law (Colossians 2:14). The authors need to examine more the verses dealing with the first day of the week and note the context.

The rest of chapter six is an attempt to justify the keeping of the Sabbath day, and an effort to show that the seventh day is still the seventh despite changes in the calendar. Next week we will examine the authors' claims that *man* changed the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first day of the week.

*Ken Chumbley*

**NEWS AND NOTES**

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett's mother, Kathy Treadway's mother and Bronwen Gibson's mother (Lavonne McClish) -- who has continued health -- related issues and who is undergoing pain management therapy; and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer.

Jack Peebles is still in the Mattie C. Hall Care Center in Aiken but he has been moved to room number 301. Continue to keep Jack and Jean and their family in your prayers at this difficult time.

Myrtle Grimsley is back from visiting her son but has not been well this week.

Maomi's sister is now out of rehab and is staying with another sister in Waynesboro, GA.

Kathy Treadway's mother is now out of the hospital back at the care home.

Pam Gossett has been out of town. Her daughter has had surgery and Pam was not well Sunday.

Our next pot luck meal will be after the morning worship on August 25.

For those who need it, the Chumbley's email address has changed to [kjchumb@gmail.com](mailto:kjchumb@gmail.com).

**"YES" MEN OR FAITHFUL PROCLAIMERS OF TRUTH**

The king of Israel (Ahab), and the king of Judah (Jehoshaphat), met to discuss going to battle for Ramoth in Gilead. The text reads, "And it came to pass in the third year, that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants, Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours, and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? And he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses" (1 Kings 22:2-4). Through making this statement, Jehoshaphat asks the king of Israel to inquire as to what the Word of the Lord would be that day. Ahab calls his prophets and they say go up, the Lord shall deliver Ramoth into your hands.

Jehoshaphat asks if there is another prophet of God. Ahab replies to the king of Judah thusly, "...There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil..." (1 Kings 22:8). Ahab had his yes men, his yes prophets; Jehoshaphat wanted a prophet of God.

Many are the Ahabs, even today. Many want a "yes" to what they want to do, rather than to hear what the Word of God says. Isn't mechanical instrumental music acceptable to God in worship? Many are the yes men; but God does not say so. Isn't it good to baptize babies because of inherited sin? Sin is the transgression of the law. What law has a baby broken? Many are the yes men, but God's Word does not so say. And yet, when people are told the Word of the Lord by followers of Micaiah, who spoke the Word of the Lord to Ahab, they cry "but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." The apostle Paul had the same problem with some at Galatia. He wrote to them, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16).

Beloved, some people may hate us when we speak what the Word of the Lord says, but the Lord will love us. If we become someone's enemy because we tell them the truth, then so be it. We can not compromise the Truth of the Word of the Lord to win friends and influence people. Always remember and practice Paul's admonition to Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

Beloved, listen to all of God's Word; God will do thee good!

Thought For Today, 08/06/2007, *Jimmie Z. Gribble, Portsmouth, VA*