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SALVATION BY SACRIFICIAL SUBSTITUTION

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Introduction

During the last ten years, scholarly interest in the OT sacrificial system has continued unabated. This has taken place, to a large extent, under the influence of the Jewish scholar Jacob Milgrom.¹ His studies on Leviticus have been innovative and challenging. He has broken new ground and raised new questions.

Several new commentaries on Leviticus have been published,² and I anticipate that more will be published within the next five years. A major study was published in 1982 on the verb *kipper*.³ It promises to be very influential. Others have addressed the sociological importance of sacrifices, or their similarities with other ancient Near Eastern religions.⁴ There continues to be a marked interest in the meaning of the sin-offering.⁵

Interestingly, most of the writers recognize that substitution is in some way operative in the Israelite sacrificial system. It is the idea of substitution that I would like to explore in this chapter. First I will go over some of the OT evidence, then I will examine the way this concept is used in the NT.

Substitution in the Old Testament

The sacrificial system in Israel functioned within a specific historical period. Several important events happened which provide a valuable theological background for understanding the nature and function of sacrifices in Israel.

Historical and Theological Contexts. The historical context is

well known. The Israelites had been enslaved in Egypt for many years. Through Moses' leadership, the Lord brought them out of Egypt and guided, protected and provided for them in their journey through the desert. Once they reached Sinai, the covenant was instituted and a sanctuary was built for the Lord. It is then that God instructed Moses concerning the sacrificial system (Lev 1:1).

The theological context includes at least three main concepts: redemption, covenant, and sin. An act of redemption preceded the institutionalization of the sacrificial system. That redemption is described in Exodus as a military victory which resulted in the release or liberation of the Israelites. But it is also described as a religious experience. In this respect, the Passover plays a key role in the narrative.

Redemption. The tenth plague and the Passover are inseparable. With the tenth plague, Egypt is completely defeated. The death of the firstborn of the Egyptians is the death of Egypt as an enslaving power. The redemption of the firstborn of the Israelites is the redemption of Israel, the firstborn of the Lord (Exod 4:22). What is particularly significant here is that redemption was accomplished through sacrificial substitution.

The tenth plague is also a threat for the Israelites. Without the passover lamb, the firstborn of the Israelites would have perished together with the firstborn of the Egyptians. Among the Israelites, a lamb was slaughtered in order to preserve and to redeem the firstborn. A sacrificial victim died in place of the firstborn. Among the Egyptians, no substitute was available and, consequently, the firstborn of every family died.⁶

This is the first sacrifice offered by the Israelites as a people. It is their first collective experience of the redemptive power of sacrificial blood. There they become fully aware of the fact that their freedom was a costly one. The life of an innocent victim was taken as a substitutive sacrifice. It is with that understanding of the meaning of redemption that the Israelites met with God at Sinai.

Covenant. At Sinai, the Israelites become the people of God. The redemptive experience is now formalized through a covenant. God commits Himself to the Israelites and they commit themselves to the Lord. Israel now becomes, "my treasured possession," "a holy

nation" (Exod 19:6). Holiness on the part of Israel was indispensable because God was going to dwell among them. By dwelling with them, God was indicating that He was the God of Israel (Exod 29:44, 45).⁷

The covenant does not only formalize the relationship, it also defines it. It is a legal agreement binding on both parties. In the case of Israel, God determined the covenant stipulations and expected Israel to obey them. This obedience is the logical response of a redeemed people (Exod 20:1, 2). But that does not make it less legally binding. God's covenant with Israel is very similar to the treaties known in the ancient Near East and used between different nations.⁸

The covenant, at Sinai, defined how the relationship between God and Israel was to be maintained. The judicial element, which characterizes the covenant, "is manifested in the stipulations, which are the law of the nation," and any violation of the law is a crime against God because He is the lawgiver.⁹ This legal context is extremely important in a proper understanding of the Israelite sacrificial system.

Sin. Sin within the covenant community was a serious matter, because it violated the covenant relationship and was offensive to God. The Sinai experience reveals the consequences of breaking the covenant and God's response to it. The worship of the golden calf put an end to the covenant relationship. As a result, God declared Israel not His people (Exod 32:7, 8) and was determined to "destroy them" (32:10).

In order to reestablish the covenant relationship, Moses functioned as a mediator between God and Israel. He knew that only through atonement would Israel be accepted by God. He said to the Israelites, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin" (Exod 32:30). The expiatory instrument he tried to use was his own relationship with the Lord. He was willing to be separated from God in order to restore Israel (32:32).¹⁰ The offer was rejected by God who finally decided to reveal His loving mercy, "forgiving [*naśa'*] wickedness [*āwôn*], rebellion [*pasha'*], and sin [*ḥaṭṭā'āh*]" (34:7). "To forgive" means literally, "to bear the wickedness," to assume responsibility

for sin. God forgives sin by assuming responsibility for it, by bearing it Himself.

The incident of the golden calf indicates that sin puts an end to the covenant relationship. The people and the individual are immediately liable to punishment, going toward extinction, unless divine forgiveness is granted.

The book of Leviticus does not modify in any way this understanding of sin and its consequences. When an Israelite violates the covenant, that is, sins by doing what "is forbidden in any of the things that the Lord commands" (4:2), he is in need of forgiveness. The sin could be unintentional or intentional.¹¹ Once the sin is committed, the individual is described as "bearing his sin" (*našáʿ awonô*) (5:1). That is to say, the person is legally culpable and will receive the consequences of his sin. In other cases, it is simply said, "he is guilty" (*ʿāšēm*) (5:2-4). The individual is in a state of alienation. The damaging consequences of his sin is about to reach him. He is legally guilty.

When the sin committed is related to the laws of cleanliness, the individual is considered to be impure. Impurity is associated in Leviticus with the realm of death.¹² The person who is impure has been transferred, so to speak, to the sphere of death. Consequently, he is separated from the community and the sanctuary. The individual's relationship with God and the community seems to come to an end. The covenant has been violated. The only hope for such a person is God's loving forgiveness.

The Sacrificial System

A Divine Gift. The sacrificial system functions within a redemptive and legal frame of reference which takes any covenant violation very seriously. Within that context, forgiveness is indeed a manifestation of God's love. There is nothing one can do to deserve it or to obtain it. It reaches the individual always as a gift. We are touching here the very nature of the Israelite sacrificial system: it is a divine gift to the covenant people. The system becomes part of the covenant and through it the covenant relationship is preserved.

The priesthood itself is a gift from God to Aaron (Exod 28:1-3). The Levites, who were chosen to assist him, are a divine gift to Aaron (Num 8:19). But above all, the expiatory process is the gift

par excellence: "For the life of a creature is the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (Lev 17:11).

The expiatory function of blood is a gift of life from God to the people. Blood, by itself, cannot expiate sin. Expiation is always under divine control. Yet, God assigned an expiatory function to the blood which was brought to the altar, making available to the Israelites a way out of their guilt, impurity and sin-bearing state.

Concept of Substitution. Therefore, to the Israelite who violated the covenant, expiation was available through a sacrificial victim. The one who was in a state of guilt, liable to punishment and already in the realm of death, was allowed to bring a sacrifice. Once the sacrifice was offered and its blood ministered, he was forgiven by the Lord (for example, Lev 4:22-26, 27-31). The idea of substitution is already implicit in this understanding of the sacrificial system. The person who is heading toward extinction or who is already in the sphere of death is removed from it and integrated into the community and the worship of the Lord because an innocent victim is transferred to the sphere of death as his substitute.

It is this type of substitution that Leviticus 17:11 is describing for us. The key phrase in this verse is 11c: "It is the blood that makes atonement for one's life" (NIV). This sentence has been and continues to be a topic of scholarly discussion.¹³ A concept which has contributed to misinterpretations is that life is thought to reside somehow in the blood. In the Bible, life and blood are equated. In fact, 17:11a should be translated, "For the life of the creature *is* the blood." It is important to keep that in mind as we read 11c. A literal translation of the Hebrew would be: "For/because it is the blood that expiates through/as/in exchange of the life/person."

The main exegetical problem is the phrase *bannepheš*. The preposition *beth* can be translated "through" (*beth* of instrumental), "as" (*beth* of identity) or "at the price of, in exchange for," (*beth* of price). Another problem is whether *nepheš* is referring to human or animal life. Most scholars reject the *beth* identity ("as") and accept the instrumental meaning. I have argued that this is a *beth* of price because blood and life are indistinguishable in biblical thinking (blood cannot expiate through life because it is life) and because the expiatory process is determined and controlled by God,

not by some intrinsic power present in the blood.¹⁴ The passage should be translated, "For it is the blood that makes atonement in exchange for the person."¹⁵

Theological Meaning. The theological content of the passage is revealing. God has chosen blood to be an instrument of atonement because it is life. Since it is life, it belongs exclusively to Him and must be always returned to him. Never should it be "eaten." In the expiatory process, life is returned to God through the altar of sacrifices. That blood is expiatory because it is accepted by God in exchange for the life/blood of the repentant sinner. The life of the sacrificial victim takes the place of the life of the Israelite. Thus is the covenant relationship preserved or renewed.

Leviticus 17:11 provides a general principle for the interpretation of the meaning of the sacrificial system. Our interpretation is supported by the theological context of Leviticus which interprets the exodus from Egypt in terms of a redemptive substitutive sacrifice and takes sin within the covenant setting to be a serious offense against God.

Sacrifice Without Blemish. But sacrificial substitution is also expressed through the rituals performed when offering a sacrifice. We can only provide a summary here. The sacrificial animal was required to be in perfect health and without any defect (Lev 1:3, 10; 22:17-25). The sinner is a person who has corrupted himself (*šihēt*; Exod 32:7). The sacrificial victim, which will take his place, should not have any defect (*šihēt*; Lev 22:25).

Laying on of Hands. The meaning of the laying on of hands continues to be debated. More scholars are arguing now that there are really two rituals. In one case, two hands are used, in the other only one. When both hands are used, the concept of transference is present (Lev 16:21); but when only one hand is used, the animal is being identified as belonging to the offerer.¹⁶ But this is far from certain. The passages in which a single hand is mentioned are prescriptive texts (e.g. Lev 1:4; 3:2, 8, 13). There is some evidence which suggests that in practice both hands were used in spite of the singular in the prescription (Num 27:18, 23; Deut 34:9).¹⁷ It is therefore possible to argue that in the ritual of the laying on of hands, both hands were always used.

But even if in some cases one hand was used, that does not

necessarily mean that we must have two radically different meanings. The idea of transference through the laying on of hands is present in cultic (Lev 16:21) and non-cultic cases (Lev 24:14; Num 27:18-23; 8:10). There is no reason for denying it to the rest of the sacrificial cases.¹⁸

Priestly Eating of Sin Offering. That the sin of the repentant sinner is transferred to the sacrificial victim is indicated by the fact that when the priest eats of the sacrificial flesh, he "bears sin" (Lev 10:17). Moses said to Aaron that the flesh of the sin-offering "was given to you to bear the sin of the community, to make atonement for them." In this context, "to bear sin" expresses purpose.¹⁹ When the blood is not taken to the sanctuary, the priest eats some of the flesh of the victim. This means that the sacrificial victim was bearing the sin of the repentant Israelite. It was transferred to the victim through the laying on of hands. The animal received the sin and its consequences and died in place of the individual.

Significance of Ministered Blood. But that was not the end of sin. Through the blood manipulation, it was transferred to the sanctuary. Here we must remember that blood/life belongs to God. Through the blood manipulation, the priest is returning it to God. That blood is an instrument in the expiatory process because it is taking the place of the life of the repentant sinner. Through it, sin is being transferred to the sanctuary.²⁰

Day of Atonement Theodicy. Once a year, during the Day of Atonement, the sanctuary is purified. The Day of Atonement could be called a theodicy. On that day, it became clear that sin and God were radically different, having nothing in common. During the daily sacrifices, sin and impurity were brought into contact with holiness in order to expiate the sins of Israel. This encounter, by its very nature, escapes rational analysis, not because it is necessarily illogical, but because it transcends human logic by taking us deep into the mystery of atonement. The holy came into contact with the impure and yet remained holy; life and death confronted each other. Through this impenetrable encounter, forgiveness came into existence.

Nevertheless, God's confrontation with sin must come to an end. He must be seen the way He is, apart from sin. On the Day of Atonement, sin is removed from His presence and returned to its

place of origin. The soteriological significance of the sacrificial system reached its highest typical zenith during the Day of Atonement.

However, the soteriological dimension of the sacrificial system with animals had some limitations. It is those limitations that Isaiah 52:3-53:12 removes. In order to restore man to full and permanent harmony with God, more than animal sacrifices were needed. In fact, the sacrificial system pointed to the figure of the Servant of the Lord, the perfect sacrifice provided by God to bring in eternal salvation. He is the perfect lamb who "took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows;" "he was pierced for our transgressions . . . crushed for our iniquities. . . by his wounds we were healed" (53:5, 6). He is the perfect substitute: "My righteous Servant will justify many and will bear their iniquities" (53:11); "he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors" (53:11).

In this messianic prophecy, we have reached the soteriological zenith of the OT; we are at the threshold of the New.

Conclusion. This brief summary of the soteriological significance of sacrificial substitution in the OT suggests that substitution is not only redemptive but also the indispensable ingredient in the preservation of a proper covenant relationship with the Lord.

Breaking the covenant is indeed life-threatening. Outside the covenant, death seems to rule. Sacrificial substitution is not man's attempt to pacify an angry God. It is rather a loving God who, although taking sin seriously, is willing to forgive repentant sinners. He accomplished this by providing a sacrificial substitute to whom sin was transferred and in whom death was actualized. In that process, He Himself came into contact with sin and impurity without compromising His holiness. That contact came to an end each year during the Day of Atonement.

We begin to grasp the full implications of sacrificial substitution in the OT only when we look at the inscrutable figure of the *Ebed Yahweh* (Servant of Yahweh) in Isaiah. He is the perfect substitute.

Substitution in the New Testament

Sacrificial terminology is applied throughout the NT to

Christ's death. There is a conscious effort to describe it as a sacrifice. This interpretation seems, in fact, to have been the prevailing one in the apostolic church. One gets the distinct impression that the biblical writers used that terminology realistically. When they describe Christ's death as a sacrifice, that is exactly what they mean.²¹ The "matrix within which that language works" is the OT.²² Of course, there is a significant change: the victim is not an animal now, but the Son of God.²³

The NT writers used several different images to interpret the significance of Christ's death (for example, redemption, reconciliation, and justification).²⁴ But all of them are based on the realistic understanding of Christ's death as a sacrifice. It is this underlying theological perception which provides meaning, unity and value to those images.²⁵

I will summarize briefly the use of sacrificial terminology in the NT. Then I will explore the role of sacrificial language in relation to the concepts of redemption, reconciliation and justification.

Sacrificial Language in the NT

Synoptic Gospels. In the Gospels, the Lord's Supper provided the setting for one of the most important statements on Christ's death as a sacrificial victim (Matt 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20). In the three Gospels, the cup is a symbol of Jesus' blood which is going to be poured out (*ekcheō/ekchunō*) for man. The language is sacrificial.²⁶ Jesus' sacrifice initiates the new covenant and brings in forgiveness of sin (Matt 26:28). It is an expiatory sacrifice offered "for" (*peri*; Matt 26:28; *hupér*, Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20) "many." It deals with the problem of sin through forgiveness and by reestablishing or instituting the new covenant.²⁷

It is usually accepted that in the Lord's Supper sayings there is an influence of Isaiah 53.²⁸ This would mean that Christ's death is seen as the fulfillment of the Messianic Suffering Servant prophecy. Even Luke, who does not stress the atoning significance of Jesus' death,²⁹ finds in Jesus' experience a fulfillment of that Messianic prophecy. According to him, Jesus "was reckoned with transgressors" (22:37; Isa 53:12). In Luke 23:47, Jesus is called "a righteous man (*dikaïos*)." Hence, according to Luke, the righteous one was counted as a transgressor. It is difficult to deny that Luke

saw in Jesus' experience the fulfillment of Isaiah 53. Implicit is the idea that he died, like the Servant, in place of others. His death was not the death of a martyr, but of the Messiah.³⁰

Acts. Acts also shows that Luke understood the death of Jesus to be a fulfillment of Isaiah 53 (Acts 8:30-35). It is true that we do not have here an explicit interpretation of Jesus' death as a substitutive sacrifice,³¹ but the probability is there. The Servant Christology was well known by Luke (3:16-21; 4:17-21).³² Sacrificial terminology is found in Acts 20:28: The Church was bought "through his own blood."³³ Redemption and sacrifice are brought together here.

John's Gospel. John uses sacrificial terminology when referring to Jesus' death. In what is probably a clear reference to Isaiah 53, John the Baptist identifies Jesus as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (1:29). This may be a reference to the passover lamb or to sacrificial victims in general. In 19:14 is said that Jesus died when the passover lamb was being sacrificed, making a connection between both lambs. There are other passages which suggest that John saw Jesus' death as the fulfillment of the passover sacrifice (19:29; 19:36).³⁴

Paul's Epistles. In Romans 3:25, Paul says, "God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood," (NIV); 5:9 states, "we have now been justified by his blood" (NIV). As we will show below, this sacrificial terminology describes Christ's death as a substitute for man. In Romans 8:3, Christ's sacrifice is called "a sin-offering" (*perí hamartías*).³⁵ What we cannot do, God did for us through the sin offering He Himself provided.

In 1 Corinthians 5:7, Paul writes, "Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed" (NIV). He also quotes Jesus' words during the Last Supper: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor 11:25, NIV). The sacrificial meaning is retained. The idea of substitution is present in 2 Corinthians 5:21 and Galatians 3:13 (more on these verses below). According to Ephesians, "we have redemption through his blood" (Eph 1:7, NIV), and that same blood created peace between Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2:13). In Ephesians 5:2, Christ's love moved Him to give Himself up "for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (NIV). Reconciliation is through

Christ's blood (Col 1:20). In this particular case the apostle is talking about cosmic reconciliation.

Peter's First Epistle. Peter's soteriology is based also on sacrificial concepts. According to him, we were redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Pet 1:18, 19, NIV). To that he adds, "Christ died for sins once and for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Pet 3:18). The messianic prophecy of Isaiah 53, Peter indicates, was fulfilled in Christ's death: "He bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Pet 2:21-24, NIV).³⁶

John's First Epistle. 1 John 1:7 describes Christ's blood, (= sacrifice) as the means by which we are purified "from all sin." Christ is our expiatory sacrifice (*hilasmós*), 1 John 2:2; 4:10. The term *hilasmós* belongs to the *híleōs* ("gracious, merciful") word-group. To this group belongs the verb *hiláskomai* ("propitiate, expiate"), the noun *hilasmós* ("propitiation, sacrifice") and *hilastērion* ("means of propitiation/expiation").

Much has been written about this word-group.³⁷ The fundamental question is whether it contains the idea of propitiation or expiation. It is undeniable that in the LXX and in non-biblical Greek, it is associated with propitiation. But propitiation requires that the object of the sacrifice be God, that is, we propitiate Him; but that is never the case in the Bible. The sacrifice is offered to cleanse us, to reestablish our broken relationship with the Lord. In that case, it means expiation.

But, as we will try to demonstrate below, the sacrifice of Christ and its benefits are also discussed in context where God's wrath or judgment is operative. This is particularly the case in Romans 3:25. The word *hilastērion* is taken by me to mean "expiatory sacrifice." Through it, God's condemnation of sin falls, not on man, but on Christ. If the translation "propitiation" is to be retained, it must be made clear that God propitiates Himself, moved by His own love and not by man. That love expresses itself in the fact that God provided a substitute who died in place of us.

Revelation. In Revelation, the blood of the Lamb (*'arnion*) has a very important function (5:6, 8, 12). Through it, redemption was accomplished (5:9); it has cleansing power (7:14), and it was through this sacrifice that the evil powers were defeated (6:9-13).

At Christ's coming, He will defeat them once and for all (17:14). Meanwhile, the believer can also overcome the Dragon through the blood of the Lamb (12:11; 1:5). Christ's sacrifice is described in Revelation as a victory over the evil forces. He defeated them through death. Even the so-called "classic theory" of atonement presupposes a sacrificial understanding of Christ's death.³⁸

Although sacrificial terminology is not applied to Christ's death in every book of the NT, its interpretation as a sacrificial offering seems to be presupposed. This interpretation, as M. Hengel has shown, goes back to Jesus Himself.³⁹ The apostles just followed the teachings of their Master. Since the sacrificial language is taken from the OT, it is right to conclude that Christ's sacrificial death shares the same meaning as the sacrifices of the OT. That is confirmed by evidence in the NT which, when analyzed more carefully, reveals that Christ's death was a substitutive sacrifice.

Redemption

Jesus' death is interpreted by different NT writers as an act of redemption. The concept of redemption is present throughout, from Matthew (20:28) to Revelation (5:9). The word-group is a rich one. The noun *lútron* designates the instrument of redemption and is usually translated "ransom," that is, what is paid in order to be free or redeemed, the price of redemption.⁴⁰ *'Antílutron* is probably an emphatic form of *lútron* which seems to stress the idea of full price.⁴¹ *Lútrōsis* and *'apolútrōsis* are synonyms, "redemption," "deliverance," or "release."⁴² The agent of redemption is called *lutrōtēs*, "redeemer, liberator" (Acts 7:35). *Lutrōō* is the verb: "to free by ransom."⁴³ This verb is used in the NT only in the middle voice, "to release by payment of a ransom, to redeem."

This word-group was widely used in the market place during the NT period. The terminology designates the redemption of prisoners of war and slaves through a ransom.⁴⁴ In the LXX, we find, in addition, references to redemption or deliverance from dangers, problems, and sufferings.⁴⁵ It is certainly difficult to deny that the *lútron* word-group designates fundamentally a "change of ownership as a result of payment of a price."⁴⁶

In the NT the *lútron* word-group is used to indicate the end result and/or the process of redemption. When the end result is

stressed, the idea of a ransom, a payment, is not explicitly stated. In such cases, the result of redemption is "deliverance, salvation" (Luke 1:68; 2:38; 24:21). This is also the case when redemption is described as an eschatological expectation: The future "redemption of our bodies" (Rom 8:23); "the day of redemption" (Eph 4:30; cf. Luke 21:28; Eph 1:4). In such contexts, redemption is a synonym for salvation because the biblical writer is interested in how it affects us and not so much in the process through which it was obtained.⁴⁷

There are a series of passages in the NT in which the *lútron* word-group is used to express not just the end result of redemption, but also the means and the process itself. In those cases, sacrificial terminology and ideology are used. Let us look at some of them.

Ephesians 1:7. *In him we have redemption [apolútrōsis] through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. . . (NIV).*

The context discusses God's "glorious grace" which we have received "freely" in Christ. That grace manifested itself in an act of redemption. The mention of "blood" (*haima*) introduces a sacrificial understanding of Christ's death. Redemption is accomplished here through Christ's atoning death.⁴⁸ This redemption is further defined as "forgiveness [*aphesis*] of sins." Atonement and forgiveness are brought together here in the same fashion as in Leviticus 4. In Leviticus, the sacrificial victim was offered and then, it is stated, "and they [the Israelites] will be forgiven" [LXX *'aphiēmi*] (Lev 4:20, 26, 30).⁴⁹ Redemption is deliverance from sin. This is accomplished through the blood of Christ. What the believer received freely was very costly to God. The blood of Jesus was the price paid for our redemption.⁵⁰ His substitutive sacrifice brought deliverance from sin to the believer.

1 Peter 1:18, 19. *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed [lutrōō] from the empty way of life. . . , but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect (NIV).*

This passage contains several important ideas.

1. What Peter is about to say is something his readers know already. Its content belongs to the traditional Christian interpretation of Christ's death.⁵¹

2. Redemption (*lutróō*) is accomplished here through the payment of a ransom. This is indicated by the context. There is first a negative statement followed by a positive one. The price paid was not gold or silver. Such payment cannot be given for the redemption of man because they are corruptible, they are perishable.⁵² The real price was the “precious [*tímios*] blood of Christ.” The word *tímios* does not mean just “precious,” but also “costly.” The price paid to redeem the believers was a high one.

3. Redemption is accomplished here through the sacrificial death of Christ. Peter makes it clear that the expression “blood of Christ” had a sacrificial meaning in the early apostolic doctrine of atonement. Christ is a sacrificial victim, a lamb (*amnos*) without blemish (*amōmos*) or defect. The reference is not just to the pass-over lamb but to sacrificial victims in general (Exod 29:30; Lev 12:6).⁵³ A possible reference to Isaiah 53:7 should not be excluded.⁵⁴

The contrast between the blood/life of Christ and gold and silver suggests that, for the redemption of humankind, life had to be given. Life was given in place of life. That was the price paid. This understanding of Christ’s death goes back to Jesus himself.⁵⁵

Mark 10:45. *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life [psuchē] as a ransom [lútron] for [anti] many (NIV).*

Much has been written about this verse.⁵⁶ The debate has centered mainly on issues raised by tradition criticism (Is this an original saying of Jesus?) and the question of its possible connection with Isaiah 53. There is general agreement among scholars that we have here Jesus’ *ipsissima vox* (the very word of Jesus). Although the influence of Isaiah 53 has been strongly denied by some, it has been recently defended on two grounds. First, there is a linguistic connection between it and Isaiah 53:11, 12 (LXX). There are three words in Mark 10:45 found in Isaiah: (*para*)*didonai* (“to give”), *psuchē* *autoú* (“his life”), and *polloí* (“many”). This is enough to argue for the dependence of the one on the other.⁵⁷ Secondly, there is also a conceptual connection. In both passages, the idea of substitution is present. The Servant suffers and dies vicariously and so does the Son of Man.⁵⁸

The preposition “for” (*anti*) is very important in this case. It means “in place of, instead of.”⁵⁹ The idea of substitution is clearly

expressed. And “even if the *anti* be translated ‘to the advantage of,’ the death of Jesus means that what happens to Him what would have had to happen to the many. Hence, He takes their place.”⁶⁰ The interpretation of atonement as an interchange is also excluded by Mark 10:45. Christ is not simply sharing our experience; He is taking our place so that we can live.⁶¹ Notice that what He gives is “his life.” Life and blood are equated in cultic theology. The ransom price, the *lútron* given, is Christ’s own life.

That life is given in place of the life of the “many.” Implicit is the idea that their life is in jeopardy. Unless something happens, the “many” will perish. Christ was willing to pay the price for their liberation from death. He surrendered His own life as a substitutive ransom for them.⁶² In Mark 8:37, in the context of the announcement of his own death, Jesus raised the rhetorical question, “What can a man give in exchange for his life?” The answer to that question is found in Mark 10:45.⁶³

The same idea is expressed in 1 Timothy 2:6: Christ gave “himself as a ransom [*anti-lútron*] for [*hupér*] all men.” In this case, the preposition *anti* was prefixed to the noun *lútron* and the noun is followed by the preposition *hupér* (“for, on behalf of”). Christ is a ransom paid not just for our benefit but particularly in our place. “The prepositional prefix emphasizes the notion of substitution.”⁶⁴

Galatians 3:13. *Christ redeemed [exagorázō] us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us (NIV).*

A new word is introduced here to express the concept of redemption. The verb *exagorázō* means “to redeem, to purchase,” and is used in Greek legal contexts to refer to the manumission of slaves.⁶⁵ Here in Galatians, the verb is used to refer to redemption from the curse of the law. The passage expresses several important ideas.

First, the Christians were formerly under the curse of the law. That curse falls “on those who rely on their own fulfillment of the law’s demands and on those who fail to keep the whole law” (see Gal 3:10).⁶⁶ The result of the curse is death. For Paul, “the whole world is a prisoner of sin” (Gal 3:22, NIV), and the law is the gatekeeper. Therefore all are “under the law (*hupó nómon*),” (see verse 3:22).

Secondly, the claim of the law, its curse, is upheld by Paul. That

curse is ordained by God and "truly corresponds to His holy will toward sinners."⁶⁷ We are facing here "a judicial action of God,"⁶⁸ the validity of which is not questioned or rejected. The curse of the law occupies a legal place in human experience because of the universality of sin.

Thirdly, the claim of the law is satisfied. The curse cannot be canceled or neutralized. Neither can it be ignored. What the law requires must be accomplished. According to Paul, the claim of the law, its curse, was fully satisfied in the death of Christ. He "became" the cursed One. The implication, obviously, is that the curse of the law had no claim on Him. Yet, He accepted it.

Fourthly, through Christ's vicarious death, we were redeemed from the curse of the law. He became a curse "for us" (*hupér*). The preposition *hupér* expresses here the idea of substitution.⁶⁹ The concept of substitution is present in the text. Christ's soteriological act is sacrificial because He died. It is also vicarious because "he took upon himself the mortal curse."⁷⁰ Therefore, the phrase "becoming a curse for us" "presupposes sacrificial ideas."⁷¹ Christ becomes the recipient of the curse and dies, obtaining freedom and life for us. It is wrong to argue that "Christ has set men free from the curse because the judgement of the Law has been overruled."⁷² What Paul says is that the curse was actualized in Christ.

Galatians 3:13 is an important passage in understanding Paul's concept of redemption and atonement. It clearly indicates that man is alienated from God and under the curse of the law. This curse does not act independently of God. It is rather an expression of the divine will and, therefore, is a right attitude toward sinners. Man's deliverance from that state is accomplished only through the substitutionary death of Christ, which is also an act of redemption. In this soteriological process, "justice is not thrust aside, but justice is satisfied."⁷³

The verb *'agorázō* ("to buy") is applied to Christians in several places. They belong to God because they "were bought with a price" (1 Cor 6:19, 20; 7:23; cf. 2 Pet 2:1). The price paid is mentioned in Revelation 5:9: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain [*spházō*] and with your blood you purchased men for God" (NIV). Christ's death is described here as a sacrificial one.⁷⁴ In the previous verses, He is called "the Lamb"

(5:6). The lamb was slain as a sacrificial victim and the blood was used to pay for the redemption of man. It is certainly wrong to limit the meaning of the verb *'agorázō* to the concept of acquisition.⁷⁵ In Revelation 5:9, the price is indicated through the phrase *èn tō haimati* ("with the blood"). The preposition *'en* stands here for the dative of price and should be translated "at the price of [his blood]."⁷⁶

Christ's death is interpreted by the NT writers as an act of redemption. A price was paid for the salvation of man. In order for them to express the costliness of redemption, it was necessary to combine it with the sacrificial understanding of Christ's death. The price paid was extremely high: the life of Christ. Life was given in place of life. The cursed ones were redeemed by Him who became the cursed one. The NT does not raise the question: to whom was the ransom given? If someone is to be identified, it would be God.⁷⁷

Reconciliation

The interpretation of the death of Christ in terms of reconciliation is taken from social interaction, interhuman relations. It has been called "a metaphor from diplomacy."⁷⁸ Reconciliation is fundamentally "the restoration of a good relationship between enemies."⁷⁹ In that process, a mediator is usually indispensable.

For our purpose, only two verbs are important in the New Testament. *Katallássō* is used six times in the NT (Rom 5:10 [2x]; 1 Cor 7:11; 2 Cor 5:18, 19, and 20). It means "to reconcile." The verb *'apokatallássō* is just a synonym, "to reconcile." It is used only three times in the NT (Eph 2:16; Col 1:20, 22). The noun *katallagē* means "reconciliation" and is used four times (Rom 5:11; 11:15; 2 Cor 5:18 and 19). This terminology is used exclusively by Paul. The two most important passages are Romans 5:10, 11 and 2 Corinthians 5:18-21.

In 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Paul has combined pastoral concerns with theological matters. Theology must determine human behavior. Paul is defending his apostolic ministry. He is concerned that the rejection of his function as an ambassador of God may also result in the rejection of his message of reconciliation.⁸⁰ This provides him with the opportunity to define the Christian meaning of reconciliation.

Several significant statements are made in 2 Corinthians 5:18-

21. The most obvious one is that reconciliation originates in God and is initiated by Him. He "reconciled us to himself." He is always the subject and never the object of reconciliation.⁸¹ Secondly, reconciliation was mediated through the person of Christ: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." The preposition "in" (*'en*) is probably instrumental,⁸² although the locative meaning is also possible. By mentioning the need of the mediatorial presence of Christ, the distance between God and the world is emphasized. Thirdly, reconciliation means "not counting [*logizomai*] men's sins against them." This is a juridical statement. *Logizomai* means "to take into account, to credit, to place to one's account." To credit man for his own sins is to perpetuate his alienation from God. Man's existential problem is beyond his own solution. God, then, decided to hold nothing against him in order to put an end to enmity and bring in reconciliation. Man's accountability for his own sins is eliminated.

What we have just said suggests that reconciliation takes place in God's loving heart before it can be experienced by man. Deep inside the divine being, a decision was made: God will "not count men's sins against them." Because of that decision, there is no longer a barrier "to the restoration of friendly relations."⁸³ We would have to conclude that when Paul says, "God was reconciling the world to Himself" he "means that God was putting away His own condemnation and wrath" against a sinful world.⁸⁴

Until now, Paul has not clearly stated *how* God was able to reconcile the world to Himself. We know only two important things. First, this was done through Christ and, secondly, reconciliation consists of "not counting" sin against sinful human beings. The implication would be that God seems to be morally indifferent. Therefore, Paul defines more fully what he means when stating that Christ is the instrument of reconciliation. This he does in verse 21: "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

In this verse, a Christological statement—Christ's sinless nature—is used as the foundation for a soteriological one: "God made him sin." Christ had no experiential or practical knowledge of sin. Yet, he was treated like a sinner. It is extremely difficult to avoid the conclusion that Paul is dealing here with the ideas of transfer

of sin and substitution. "It is only as sinless that Christ can, in Paul's view, bear the sins of others."⁸⁵ The sin that was "not counted" to the world is now counted against Christ.

We detect here an echo of Isaiah 53:6, 10, and 12.⁸⁶ Sacrificial concepts are presupposed here. In fact, the word "sin" (*hamartia*) has been interpreted by some as a reference to the "sin offering" in the OT.⁸⁷ According to this interpretation, God offered Christ as a sin offering to expiate the sins of the world. It is rather difficult to be certain that the reference is to the sin offering. Nevertheless, the basic soteriological significance of the passage is not affected either way. The context indicates that God dealt with the sin problem in Christ.

This is not just representation, as some want us to believe,⁸⁸ but substitution. It is because our sin was imputed to the Mediator that they are not counted against us.⁸⁹ God is not morally indifferent; He Himself in Christ assumed responsibility for the sins of the world by transferring them to Him as our substitute.⁹⁰ In fact, verse 14 states, "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for [*hupér*] all, and therefore all died." The preposition *hupér* is used here with substitutionary force.⁹¹

The same message is found in Romans 5:10-11. In this case, man's condition before reconciliation is described as "enmity" ("When we were God's enemies"). The word *'echthros* has an active and a passive meaning. In the active, it means "the enemy, the opponent;" in the passive, "hated."⁹² In this passage, the active meaning would deny any level of hostility on God's part toward man, while the passive would suggest an original negative disposition on God's part. Some have opted for the active meaning.⁹³ It would probably be better to accept that both ideas are present here.⁹⁴

In other words, "The enmity which is removed in the act of reconciliation is both sinful man's hostility to God. . . and also God's hostility to sinful man" (*cf.* Rom 11:28).⁹⁵ This is supported by Paul's discussion on the condition of man in the previous chapters of Romans. There, he describes man as being under the wrath of God because of his sinfulness and rebellion. Indeed, "the essential features of man's state prior to reconciliation are his entanglement in self-seeking which cannot fulfill the divine command of love

(Rom 8:7c) and his consequent standing under the divine displeasure (Rom 8:8), wrath and judgement."⁹⁶

It was, then, necessary for God to take the initiative, to put aside his rightful hostility toward sinful man in order to bring in a new state of reconciliation and peace. This was possible "through the death of his son." The blood of the son is mentioned in verse 9. We are, therefore, dealing here with a sacrificial understanding of the cross. There is implicitly here a substitutionary understanding of Christ's death. Reconciliation is a possibility because in His person, God's hostility toward sinful man was fully realized. It is also there that our enmity comes to an end.

Reconciliation and sacrifice are inseparable. From the very beginning, as soon as man rebelled against God, He lovingly sought to preserve His relationship with sinful humanity. God decided to reestablish that relationship to its Edenic state. Moved only by His love, He determined to preserve the relationship by not counting man's sin against him but rather against His own Son. Man's sin was transferred to Him who died as our substitute. According to Revelation 13:8, he is "the Lamb that was slain from the creation of the world" (NIV).

Justification

Justification is an image, used to interpret the significance of Christ's death, taken from the law courts. The two passages we have just discussed (2 Cor 5:18-21; Rom 5:10-11) bring together reconciliation and justification by faith. They are almost synonyms. Yet, they express different ideas. What makes it possible to bring them together is the fact that both are actions of God made possible through the sacrificial death of Christ.

According to Romans 5:9, "we have been justified by [*en*] his blood." Justification is a reality only because Christ died as a sacrificial victim for us.

In any interpretation of the sacrificial death of Christ and its relationship with justification by faith, Romans 3:21-26 must play a significant role. We do not have the time and space to analyze this important passage.⁹⁷ I will only share with you my conclusions.

In the interpretation of Romans 3:21-26, we should keep in mind its context. Paul has argued that Gentiles and Jews are

exposed to God's judgment. The whole world is alienated from God. The world is "held accountable to God" (3:19, NIV). The word translated "to be accountable" (*hupódikos*) means "answerable to." Here in Romans, it pictures humankind "standing at God's bar, their guilt proven beyond all possibility of doubt, awaiting God's sentence of condemnation."⁹⁸ Paul is going to argue that "now" God, through Christ's expiatory sacrifice, has declared man innocent, righteous before Him (3:21-24). God has revealed that righteousness through the Christ event, and it is available to every one who believes in Him. This new righteousness is free.

Next, Paul proceeds to answer the question: how is it possible for God to justify freely those who believe? The answer is, through Christ's redemptive work. "By this redemption in the Cross there is solved the problem of how God can forgive without implying that sin and righteousness do not matter."⁹⁹

This redemption was possible because God provided Christ as an expiatory sacrifice. The word *hilastērion* is referring here not to the mercy seat (the cover of the ark of the covenant) but to an instrument of expiation.¹⁰⁰ The phrase "in his blood" clarifies even more that Paul is giving to Christ's death a sacrificial meaning. By it, Paul is most probably indicating the price of our redemption and it could be translated "at the price of his blood."¹⁰¹

This redemptive sacrifice provides the ground for God's acquittal of repentant sinners. It was necessary because mankind was facing God's judgment and wrath. But the purpose of that sacrifice was larger than that. By dealing with man's sin in the person of his sacrificial substitute, God showed that He does not take sin lightly. His justice was not compromised. If He, in His patience, tolerated sin before Christ's death, now, because of this expiatory sacrifice, we know His real attitude toward sin. He is righteous in the way He has dealt and is now dealing with man's sins. Soteriology, as well as theodicy, are beautifully combined in this important passage.

As a summary of the contribution of Romans 3:21-26 to our understanding of Christ's death as a sacrifice, we could say:

1. *Christ's expiatory sacrifice is a divine gift.* It is God who "presented" or "exhibited" Christ as a sacrificial offering. Man cannot make any contribution to the expiatory process, he cannot provide his own sacrifice.¹⁰² We find here a typological fulfillment

of Leviticus 17:11. The old as well as the new expiatory system is a gift from God.

2. *Christ's expiatory sacrifice is a salvific event.* Through this sacrifice, man has been liberated from his sin and its consequence. Because of redemption, God can declare man righteous. This sacrifice has changed man's situation from one of alienation and enslavement to one of fellowship and freedom.¹⁰³

3. *Christ's expiatory sacrifice provides meaning to the concepts of justification and redemption.* Paul establishes a close connection between sacrifice, justification, and redemption. The basic concept is the one of sacrifice. Without this sacrifice, redemption and justification were impossible. In Romans 3:21-26, justification is related to cultic terminology. In the OT, the vocabulary of justice, justification is not limited to the legal sphere. This terminology is also important in the cult. The declaration of justice was pronounced also in the temple (Ps 24:3-6; 15:1, 2). Legal and cultic concepts, forensic and soteriological convictions, found common ground in the sacrificial system.

4. *Christ's expiatory sacrifice was substitutive.* Paul makes clear that man was enslaved by sin, totally alienated from God, unable to appeal his case, waiting for his sentence. He also says that God pronounced the sentence, not against man, but against Christ Jesus. The death sentence was executed in the Son, who died in place of man, making it possible to redeem and declare man righteous.

5. *Christ's expiatory sacrifice is a revelation.* Paul emphasizes that through Christ's sacrifice, God has revealed Himself to be righteous. He has revealed His true attitude toward sin and the sinner. On the one hand, He revealed His justice by condemning the sinner; on the other, He has revealed His mercy by redeeming and justifying him. Christ's substitutive sacrifice is the revelation of God's salvific and punitive justice.

Conclusion. The death of Christ as a substitutive sacrifice is of foundational value in NT soteriology. It is this concept which provides theological unity and consistency to the main interpretations of Christ's death. The application of sacrificial language to Jesus' death is not just an accident and "did not arise on the periphery of Christological development."¹⁰⁴ It belongs to the very

roots of Christology and soteriology and goes back to Jesus himself.¹⁰⁵

Martin Hengel has shown that in the Greek and Roman world, the idea of a person dying on behalf of friends, the city, or the good of the community, was very common.¹⁰⁶ In some cases, that death was understood as an expiatory sacrifice offered to propitiate the anger of the gods.¹⁰⁷ The differences between this type of sacrificial death and Christ's death are, as he himself suggests, very significant. For one, Christ's expiatory death is of a universal nature. He died "for all human guilt."¹⁰⁸ I would add that His death was not just representative but substitutive. He died in place of sinful man. God's loving grace was given "not as a result of the heroic action of a particular man, but by God himself, through Jesus the Son who was delivered over to death."¹⁰⁹ It is totally unnecessary for man to attempt to pacify God. And finally, Christ's substitutive death is an eschatological event which took place "in the phase of the imminent judgement of the world."¹¹⁰

Once the sacrifice was offered, Christ ascended to heaven to intercede on behalf of his people. After the antitypical Day of Atonement is over his contact with sin will come to an end. It is to this experience that Hebrew 9:28 is referring: Christ was sacrificed to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, apart from sin, to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

General Conclusion

There is a theological unity and continuity between the OT understanding of sacrificial substitution and the NT description of Christ's death as a substitutive sacrifice. In fact, the connection is in terms of type-antitype. Yet, the underlying theological concepts remain the same. Redemption and forgiveness are God's actions. He initiates it, moved by His loving concern for man. In that process, sin is taken very seriously and defined as offensive to God. Through sacrificial substitution, God is able to reveal His hatred toward sin and His merciful love toward sinful man.

Any attempt to define the meaning of the cross exclusively in terms of a revelation of love, that is, without taking into consideration sacrificial substitution, is not only one-sided but also unfaithful to the soteriological message of the Bible. Christ's death "must

benefit us if it is to reveal love for us. It will not do to say that it benefits us because, or in the sense that, it reveals love. That would be to argue in circle."¹¹ Christ's death is indeed the greatest revelation of God's love *because* in it "God was reconciling the world to Himself. . . not counting men's sins against them," but rather making "him who had no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor 5:19, 20, NIV).

Endnotes

¹ For a list of his many publications, see Angel M. Rodriguez, *Substitution in the Hebrew Cultus* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1979), pp. 329-30.

² Bernard J. Bamberger, *Leviticus* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregation, 1979); Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979); R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980); G. A. F. Knight, *Leviticus* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981); A. Noordtjij, *Leviticus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982); Baruch A. Levine, *Leviticus* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1989); and R. Laird Harris, "Leviticus," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990).

³ Bernd Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift und zur Wurzel KPR im Alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982).

⁴ Gary A. Anderson, *Sacrifices and Offerings in Ancient Israel: Studies in Their Social and Political Importance* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987); and David P. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity: Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987).

⁵ Jacob Milgrom, "The Graduated HATTAT of Leviticus 5:1-13," *JAOS* 103 (1983):249-54; N. Kiuchi, *The Purification Offering in the Priestly Literature* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987); Noam Zohar, "Repentance and Purification: The Significance and Semantics of HATTAT in the Pentateuch," *JBL* 107 (1988):609-18; Alfred Marx, "Sacrifice pour les péchés ou rite de passage? Quelques réflexions sur la fonction du HATTAT," *RB* 96 (1989):27-48; Jacob Milgrom, "The Modus Operandi of the Haṭṭā't: A Rejoinder," *JBL* 109 (1990):111-13.

⁶ See Rodriguez, *Substitutions*, pp. 270-76.

⁷ On the theological implications of the Israelite sanctuary, see Rodriguez, "Sanctuary Theology in the Book of Exodus," *AUSS* 24 (1986):127-45.

⁸ The amount of literature on this subject is enormous. For an introduction, see, J. A. Thompson, "Covenant (OT)," *ISBE* 1:790-93.

⁹ Jeremiah Unterman, "Covenant," *HBD*, p. 191.

¹⁰ For a different opinion, see Janowski, *Sühne*, pp. 142-44.

¹¹ Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 83-100. I still believe that in Lev 5:1-13 we are dealing with intentional sins. For a different view, see Janowski, *Sühne*, pp. 255-56; and Kiuchi, *Purification*, pp. 29, 30. The problem continues to be the meaning of the phrase *ne'alam mimmennū* (NIV, "he is unaware of it"). The Biblical evidence indicates that the verb *'alam* does not mean "to be unaware" or "to forget." It means "to conceal."

¹² For a discussion on this subject, see Rodriguez, *Substitution*, p. 149; cf.

Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), pp. 344-46.

¹³ See Kiuchi, *Purification*, pp. 102-109; Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 245; Levine, *Leviticus*, pp. 115-16; and my discussion in *Substitution*, pp. 244-57.

¹⁴ *Substitution*, pp. 245-51. Kiuchi, *Purification*, p. 108, distinguishes *nephesh* from blood (*dam*) arguing that *nephesh* is "life-essence." This is a false distinction. He takes the *beth* to be instrumental and *nephesh* as referring to animal life. Yet, he argues that the idea of substitution is still present in the text (p. 106).

¹⁵ Levine, *Leviticus*, pp. 115-16, also takes the *beth* as a *beth* of price.

¹⁶ David P. Wright, "The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite Literature," *JAOS* (1986):433-46. Cf. Janowski, *Sühne*, pp. 209-16.

¹⁷ Wright, "Gesture," p. 435, tries to solve the problem of Num. 27:18, 23, arguing that the singular *yadna* ("your hand") is "a defectively spelled dual." There is no textual evidence to support the scribal error.

¹⁸ Cf. Kiuchi, *Purification*, pp. 113-14. He argues that what is transferred is "guilt," not "sin." This seems to be a false distinction. "Sin" and "guilt" are inseparable in Hebrew thinking. To bear one is to bear the other.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

²⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the blood manipulation, see my *Substitution*, pp. 123-42.

²¹ Thus also, S. W. Sykes, "Sacrifice in the NT and Christian Theology," in *Sacrifice*, eds. M. F. C. Bourdillon and Meyer Fortes (New York: Academic Press, 1980), p. 62.

²² Colin Gunton, "Christ the Sacrifice: Aspects of the Language and Imagery of the Bible," in *The Glory of Christ in the NT: Studies in Christology*, eds. L. D. Hurst and N. T. Wright (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), p. 235.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ See, T. J. Goringe, "Title and Metaphor in Christology," *ET* 95 (1983-84):8-10.

²⁵ For a similar approach, see John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 168.

²⁶ *'Ekchunō* is a cultic term (see, Johannes Behm, "'Ekchéō," *TDNT* 2:467-68) as well as *haima* = "blood."

²⁷ On the function of forgiveness of sin in the ministry of Christ and its function in and Jesus understanding of his death as an atoning sacrifice, see Daniel J. Antwi, "Did Jesus consider His Death to be an atoning Sacrifice," *Interp* 45 (1991):17-27.

²⁸ See, R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament* (London: Tyndale Press, 1971), pp. 121-22. For the influence of Isaiah 53 on the New Testament understanding of Christ's death see also, Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the NT* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1963), pp. 51-82; W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, "Pais Theou," *TDNT* 5:654-717; Ettore Franco, "La morte del Servo Sofferent in Is. 53," in *Gesù e la sua morte* (Brescia: Paideia Editrice, 1984), pp. 219-36; Sydney H. T. Page, "The Suffering Servant Between the Testaments," *NTS* 31 (1985):481-97; and Guy Wagner, "Le scandale de la croix expliqué par le chant du Serviteur d'Esai 53," *Études Théologiques et Religieuses* 61 (1986):177-87.

²⁹ I. Howard Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Great Britain: Padernoster Press, 1970), p. 175. On the interpretation of Jesus' death in Luke-

Acts see, Dennis D. Sylva, ed. *Reimagining the Death of the Lukan Jesus* (Frankfurt: Verlag Anton Hain, 1990).

30 The martyr-prophet interpretation of the death of Jesus has been rightly criticized by Martin Hengel, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), pp. 41, 49; and Robert J. Harris, "Luke 23:47 and the Lucan View of Jesus' Death," *JBL* 105 (1986):68-70.

31 D. A. S. Ravens, "St. Luke and Atonement," *ET* 97 (1986):291-94, argues that Luke's "way of thinking about atonement . . . is not confined to a sacrificial view of the death of Jesus." As a result, he downplays the significance of those passages.

32 See, F. F. Bruce, "The speeches in Acts - Thirty Years Later," in *Reconciliation and Hope* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1974), pp. 60-62.

33 The Greek is somewhat difficult. It suggests that the blood is God's own blood. But "his Own" can be a reference to Christ ("his Beloved"). See, Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek NT* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1971), pp. 480-82.

34 This has been argued by Bruce H. Grigsby, "The Cross as an Expiatory Sacrifice in the Fourth Gospel," *JSNT* 15 (1982):51-80.

35 See, among others, H. T. Wright, "The Meaning of *Peri Hamartias* in Romans 8:3," *Studia Biblica* 3 (1978):453-59; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), p. 26; James D. G. Dunn, "Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus," in *Reconciliation*, p. 132; and Hengel, *Atonement*, p. 46.

36 Consult J. Ramsey Michaels, *Word Biblical Commentary: 1 Peter* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1988), pp. 136-37.

37 See, among others, C. H. Dodd, "*Hilaskesthai*, It's Cognates, Derivatives, and Synonyms in the Septuagint," *JTS* 32 (1931):pp. 352-60; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1955)pp. 125-85; Friedrich Büchsel and Johannes Herrmann, "*Hileos*," *TDNT* 3:300-23; p. David Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meaning* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), pp. 23-48; and K. Grayston, "*Hilaskesthai* and Related Words in LXX," *NTS* 27 (1981):640-56.

38 Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1969), is aware of the fact that Christ's death as a sacrifice was practically always associated with the classic theory. But he argues that because God is the one who makes the sacrifice and who receives it, the Latin doctrine is excluded (pp. 31-34; 57-58; 116). He concludes that the idea of sacrifice is the "means whereby the Divine will-to-reconciliation realizes itself, and which also shows how much it costs God to effect Atonement" (p. 58).

39 Hengel, *Atonement*, p. 46.

40 Hill, *Greek Words*, p. 49; F. Büchsel, "*Lútron*," *TDNT* 4:340.

41 Collin Brown, "*Lutron*," *NIDNTT* 3:197.

42 *Ibid.*, p. 189.

43 Büchsel, *Lutrōō*, p. 349.

44 eslas Spicq, "*Lútron*, *Lutrōō*," in *Notes de lexicographie Néo-Testamentaire*, vol. 3 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1982), pp. 432-33.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 430. Cf. 2 Samuel 4:9; 1 Kings 1:29; Psalms 7:2, 25:22.

46 I. Howard Marshall, "The Development of the Concept of Redemption in the NT," in *Reconciliation*, p. 159.

47 Morris, *Cross*, overlooked this distinction and pressed some passages too much in order to find in them the idea of a payment (pp. 43, 44).

48 K. Kertelge, "*Apolutrōsis*," *EDNT* 1:139.

49 On '*aphiēmi*, consult Rudolf Bultmann, "*Aphiēmi*," *TDNT* 1:509-12; H. Vorländer, "*Aphiēmi*," *NIDNTT* 1:697-703; H. Leroy, "*Aphiēmi*," *EDNT* 1:181-83.

50 This is denied by some and accepted by others. For bibliographical references to both views, see Andrew T. Lincoln, *Word Biblical Commentary: Ephesians* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), pp. 27-28. As we will show below, similar passages in the New Testament make it clear that Christ's blood was the ransom given for our salvation. In Colossians 1:14, a parallel to Ephesians 1:7, blood is not mentioned, but redemption is also brought within the realm of sacrificial ideas by referring to it as "forgiveness of sins."

51 See, for instance, F. W. Beare, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), p. 77; and J. Ramsey Michaels, *1 Peter*, p. 63.

52 Cf. Günther Harder, "*Phtheiro*," *TDNT* 9:102.

53 G. Dautzenberg, "*Amnōs*," *EDNT* 1:71.

54 Michaels, *1 Peter*, p. 66.

55 Marcus Barth, *Was Christ's Death a Sacrifice?* (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1961), p. 4.

56 See Joachim Jeremias, "Das Lösegeld für Viele (Mark 10:45)," *Judaica* 3 (1947-48):249-64; C. K. Barrett, "The Background of Mark 10:45," in *NT Essays*, ed. A. J. B. Higgins, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959) pp. 1-18; W. J. Moulder, "The OT Background and the Interpretation of Mark 10:45," *NTS* 24 (1977-78):120-27; and Peter Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, Law, and Righteousness: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), pp. 16-29.

57 Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, p. 19.

58 Hill, *Greek Words*, p. 79.

59 Büchsel, "*Antí*," *TDNT* 1:372-73; and Morris, *Cross*, pp. 30-32.

60 Büchsel, "*Lútron*," p. 343.

61 Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), pp. 26-41, interprets Paul's doctrine of atonement in terms of interchange. In this paper, I am arguing that substitution is a better concept than interchange when dealing with the atonement.

62 There is some discussion on the meaning of "many." In this passage it seems to have a collective or inclusive sense meaning "all." Consult J. Jeremias, "*Polloi*," *TDNT* 6:543-45; and F. Graber, "*Polloi*," *NIDNTT* 1:96-97.

63 Brown, "*Lútron*," p. 196.

64 Hill, *Greek Words*, pp. 76-77. Cf. Morris, *Cross*, p. 48.

65 D. H. Field, "*Agorázō*," *NIDNTT* 1:267.

66 Charles B. Cousar, *Galatians* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), p. 77.

67 Büchsel, "*Agorázō*," *TDNT* 1:126.

68 Büchsel, "*Katára*," *TDNT* 1:449.

69 "In place of" is one of the possible meanings of *hupér*. See R. E. Davis, "Christ in Our Place - The Contribution of the Prepositions," *Tyndale Bulletin* 21 (1970):81-90; Harald, Reisenfeld, "*Hupér*," *TDNT* 8:509, who states, "The train of thought. . . shows that the meaning of *hupér hemon* is 'in our favor,' though intrinsically the concept of substitution might suggest that it also means in our place or stead."

70 Reisenfeld, "*Hupér*," p. 509.

- 71 Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 150. Cf. Richard N. Longenecker, *Word Biblical Commentary: Galatians* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), p. 121.
- 72 Hooker, *From Adam*, p. 15.
- 73 Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), p. 196.
- 74 The verb *spházō* is used in the LXX to designate the slaughtering of sacrificial animals. See, Otto Michel, "Spházō," *TDNT* 7:929-31.
- 75 Stanislas Lyonnet and Léopold Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), pp. 104-19.
- 76 Consult, F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 118. Cf. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *The Book of Revelation: Justice and Judgment* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 74.
- 77 Mashall, "Development," p. 156. On this problem in the early church see, Robert H. Culpepper, *Interpreting the Atonement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1966), pp. 73-77.
- 78 T. J. Gorringer, "Title and Metaphor in Christology," *Exp Times* 95 (1983-84):9.
- 79 H. G. Link, "Reconciliation," *NIDNTT* 3:145.
- 80 See, Ralph Martin, *Word Biblical Commentary: 2 Corinthians* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), pp. 136-37.
- 81 H. Vorländer and C. Brown, "Katallássō," *NIDNTT* 3:167.
- 82 See, Rudolf Bultmann, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1985), p. 161; and Martin, *2 Corinthians*, pp. 153-54.
- 83 I. Howard Marshall, "The Meaning of 'Reconciliation,'" in *Unity and Diversity in NT Theology*, ed. Robert A. Guelich (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1978), p. 123.
- 84 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, p. 155.
- 85 C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), p. 180.
- 86 See also, J. Eichler, "Logizomai," *NIDNTT* 3:823; and Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, pp. 59-60.
- 87 For a discussion on this interpretation see, Lyonnet, *Sin*, pp. 251-56. Cf. Hengel, *Atonement*, p. 46.
- 88 E.g., Bultmann, *2 Corinthians*, p. 165; and Ernst Käsemann, "Some Thoughts on the Theme The Doctrine of Reconciliation in the NT," in *The Future of Our Religious Past*, ed. J. M. Robinson (London: SCM, 1971) p. 58.
- 89 H. W. Heidland, "Logizomai," *TDNT* 4:292.
- 90 D. E. H. Whiteley, "St. Paul's Thoughts on the Atonement," *JTS* 8 (1957):246, in an effort to reject a penal substitutionary interpretation of the phrase "God made him sin," argues that it just means "that in the providence of God Christ took upon himself human nature." The term *hamartia*, however, is never used in the New Testament to refer to the incarnation. See also *Idem.*, *The Theology of St. Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 136-37.
- 91 Martin, *2 Corinthians*, pp. 129-30. He finds in the passage both representation and substitution.
- 92 Werner Foerster, "Echthros," *TDNT* 2:811.
- 93 Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), p. 139; and Foerster, "Echthros," p. 814.

- 94 With C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark Limited, 1980), p. 267.
- 95 *Ibid.*
- 96 Büchsel, "Katallássō," p. 257.
- 97 This I did in my paper "Romans 3:21-26: Su Contribución a la interpretación de la muerte de Cristo como un sacrificio" (*unpublished*).
- 98 Cranfield, *Romans*, p. 197. See also, Christian Maurer, "Hupódikos," *TDNT* 8:558. He states that *hupódiko* "describes the state of an accused person who cannot reply at the trial initiated against him because he has exhausted all possibilities of refuting the charge against him and averting the condemnation and its consequences which ineluctably follow."
- 99 J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul* (Cambridge: University Press, 1972), p. 193.
- 100 For a detailed discussion see, Rodriguez, "Romans 3:21-26," pp. 16-25.
- 101 Cf. Sam K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as a Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), pp. 46-47.
- 102 S. W. Sykes, "Sacrifice," p. 74, writes: "It is God himself who is the judge; it is God who sets forth Christ to be the expiatory agency, through his death; and it is God from whose wrath man is saved. It appears that God is offering himself as a sacrifice in the person of his (innocent) son. But Paul never explicitly says so."
- 103 Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation*, p. 55, wrote: "God gave Jesus up to death and raised him from the dead in order to provide in the sin offering of Jesus' life the necessary basis for the justification of those who confess Jesus as their Lord."
- 104 Hengel, *Atonement*, p. 46.
- 105 *Ibid.*, pp. 71-75.
- 106 *Ibid.*, pp. 6-18.
- 107 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 108 *Ibid.*, p. 31; cf. also, C. F. D. Moule, *The Origin of Christology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 119.
- 109 *Ibid.*
- 110 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 111 John Knox, *The Death of Christ: The Cross in NT History and Faith* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1958), p. 151.