

- 22 Revelation 19:2.
 23 Revelation 19:4, NASB.
 24 1 Timothy 1:15, NASB.
 25 Romans 5:8, NASB.
 26 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10, KJV.
 27 Romans 8:34, KJV.
 28 Greek, *lutron*, Matthew 20:28; Mark 10:45.
 29 Greek, *antlutron*, 1 Timothy 2:6, KJV.
 30 Revelation 12:10.
 31 Revelation 12:11, 12.
 32 Revelation 12:17.
 33 Romans 5:1, 10.
 34 2 Corinthians 5:14, NASB.
 35 2 Corinthians 5:15, NASB.
 36 Romans 6:3, 4, RSV.
 37 Romans 6:6, KJV.
 38 Romans 6:8, NASB.
 39 Romans 6:11, 12.
 40 Romans 5:1, 10.
 41 Daniel 11:33; 12:3, RSV.
 42 Daniel 12:1-3, RSV.
 43 Daniel 12:3; 11:33, KJV.
 44 Daniel 12:4.
 45 Daniel 12:4.
 46 Revelation 10:7, NASB.
 47 Daniel 2:28, NASB.
 48 Colossians 1:25-27, RSV.
 49 Ephesians 6:19, RSV.
 50 Revelation 14:6-11.
 51 Matthew 24:14; Mark 13:10; Luke 21:31.
 52 Revelation 14:6.
 53 Revelation 14:12.
 54 Revelation 12:17.
 55 Romans 1:16, 17, NKJV.
 56 Revelation 14:12, NKJV.
 57 Revelation 12:10, NKJV.
 58 Revelation 14:6, NKJV.

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SALVATION IN SCRIPTURE*

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Introduction

The topic, "Salvation in Scripture," is extensive, covering nearly every page of the Word of God. It has far richer dimensions than we can imagine. Whenever we plumb the depths of this topic, we are renewed by the marvel of God's redeeming grace and His superabundant mercy.

I will not attempt to address the topic from existential, philosophical, or religious perspectives. That is outside the purview of this study. Scripture itself shall shine forth in its own beauty.

In Scripture the saving activity of God is manifested in known and specific places, from known and actual threats, at known and predicted times, and deriving from a known, loving and self-revealing God. He solves—in ways consistent with Himself and the plan devised in the triune Godhead—the known and real predicament of sin which originated with Satan and was entered into by mankind. Since space in a short essay is restricted, we make no attempt to be exhaustive. We present our topic under the headings: the "breadth of salvation," the "need of salvation" and the "way of salvation" as the Word of God highlights them.

We have to admit that from the biblical perspective it is impossible to define the breadth and depth and height of such a vast topic as salvation. Nevertheless, we need to make an attempt at defining the word "salvation."

The word "salvation" itself is derived from the Greek nouns *soteria* and *soterion*, both of which are rendered into English as

“salvation.” There is also the noun *soter*, belonging to the same word-group and meaning “savior.” These three nouns derive from the Greek word *sozo*, “to save.”¹

The biblical concepts of salvation are expressed by means of more than a dozen additional Hebrew and Greek terms which do not need to be recited here.² They express ideas such as redemption, deliverance, reconciliation, restoration, vindication, rescue from distress, setting free, justification, life, and the like. We realize that the breadth of the salvation theme is more than hinted at when we begin to contemplate any one of the ideas expressed by these clusters of terms.

The Breadth of Salvation

Salvation is a truth that relates to every other major truth in the Bible. Even when the terminology of salvation is not invoked, nearly every page of the Bible touches on the salvation theme.

Salvation is rooted and grounded in the Scriptural view of the Creator and creation. It reverses the fall of humankind and settles the sin problem. It is basic to the sanctuary (tabernacle/temple) in its functions and meaning. It gives meaning to the sacrificial system which God instituted and the atonement it provided in pre-New Testament times. Salvation involves God on the levels of Redeemer, Savior and Lord of life. It opposes self-salvation in any form and bases the covenant that God made with mankind on a sure footing. It provides the triune Godhead with the means of demonstrating divine love in its most complete form.

Salvation provides for humans release from guilt, peace of mind, forgiveness of sin, and new life in the here and now. It is the supreme demonstration of divine mercy and grace. It makes possible the way to be safe in Christ for the present and to look forward to a bright future. It reaches its final goal in the Second Coming of Christ and the earth recreated.

All institutions, practices and ideas contained in the Old and New Testaments originate in the saving acts of God. None of them was imagined, devised, or invented by human beings. Human invention is indeed known in the Bible, but time and again it is characteristic of man-made accommodation to heathen practices and foreign influences, issuing in tragic idolatry.

Every institution, figure and symbol mentioned in the Old Testament finds its fulfillment in Christ's birth, life, death, resurrection and heavenly ministry. Christ's vicarious and substitutionary death is central to the plan of salvation. He is our Substitute. His earthly life from His incarnation to His death, followed by His triumphant resurrection and His continuous heavenly ministry which entered into its final phase in 1844—all foretold by prophetic oracle—are vital aspects in the total view of salvation. These, and other majestic aspects of the divine salvific plan, are all part of the grand presentation of the biblical history of salvation into which we as believers are integrated and which climaxes in the triumphant return of Jesus, our Lord.

There will come a time at the conclusion of the millennium, as predicted in Scripture, when an eternity without tears, pain, suffering, and death will be secured for all the redeemed. Then sin will finally be eradicated by Him who was its Conqueror on the cross. Immortal life in full communion with the loving Father and the self-giving Son of God will be the happy state of all who have been saved by grace and have followed and obeyed the divine law which God gave as an expression of His love for the benefit of humankind.

The Need of Salvation

Is there any need for salvation? While this question sounds preposterous or presumptuous to the believer, it raises issues that have concerned theologians, philosophers, and other deep thinkers from as far back as the beginning of history. The whole issue of salvation as a subject presupposes that something has gone wrong, and that humanity is in need of some unusual assistance to bring it out of its predicament on personal and corporate levels. Naturally, many different responses have been provided, some even denying any need. Some of these call for our attention.

Reincarnation and Salvation

“New age” thinking is part of our society. Asian religions are penetrating many parts of the world as never witnessed in this century before. Parapsychology and renewed interest in the supernatural are in the forefront of much modern thought as not witnessed in this century before.

It is typical for non-Christian religions to see no need for salvation as understood in Christian teaching. Instead, they teach the reincarnation of the soul.

In most Asian religions humans are integrated into a world order that is cyclical and repetitive. This world order is a cycle of never ending repetitions of life cycles with a transmigration of the soul. In the teaching of these religions the soul never dies. Life is said to spiral to ever greater heights of existence, ending finally in a union with divinity.

Alternatively, in some forms of Asian religious thought, life is seen in pessimistic terms. Man never reaches the blessed state of union with divinity, despite all human efforts and man-made attempts. But although the immortal soul may not reach its highest levels of existence, it still engages in transmigrations from one being to another.

The concept of reincarnation or rebirth, usually associated with Asian religions, has gained massive popularity in the world today. While the idea of reincarnation originated at about 1,000 B.C. in northern India, in the United States and other Western countries, which find themselves in a post-Christian or secular humanistic setting, the belief in reincarnation has reached unprecedented popularity. Reincarnation is particularly promoted in the New Age Movement and is passed along with the resurgence of various forms of Asian religion.

Basic to all forms of reincarnation is the notion that humans are able to engage in an improvement of their previous existences without any divine support. The ideas of self-fulfillment, self-help and especially self-salvation are essential. There is no need of a savior, and no need for anyone, divine or human, to be the substitute for one's guilt and sin. The immortal soul³ stands in no need of salvation.

In reincarnation thought humans pass from one previous existence to another and to successive ones without end. If the life of a given person was moral and upright, then the reincarnated life moves up on the ladder to a higher form of human existence in the next life and so on. "The ultimate objective of all reincarnation is to fuse with 'ultimate reality,' to merge with God, to become God."⁴

While reincarnation had an eastern origin, it was already

known among the ancient Greek philosophers. It became part of the Platonic philosophical tradition which in turn had a great influence on Western thought. "Plato, in the 5th-4th century B.C., believed in an immortal soul that participates in frequent reincarnations."⁵ This supposed that the souls of human beings (and also of animals) had a prior existence before they were born into mortal bodies.

It is acknowledged today that belief in the preexistence of souls in Jewish and early Christian literature "exhibited influences from Platonic thought."⁶

It may be of interest to learn that reincarnation teaching emerged in the 18th century Western thought. In the 19th century the Asian-oriented and occult movement known as Theosophy, founded by Madame H. P. Blavatsky (1831-1891), promoted the teaching of reincarnation.⁷ That theosophic thought is very much alive in our century is proven by Aldous Huxley's book, *The Perennial Philosophy* (1946) and by the incorporation of much theosophic thought into the current New Age Movement.

Basic to all views of reincarnation is "a monistic [that is, the view that reality is constituted of one principle], mystical, occult world view that promotes the essential divinity of humanity, [and] denies the notion of a sovereign personal God, . . ."⁸ God is perceived—as in much modern liberal theology—as "ultimate reality."⁹ Reincarnation offers the ultimate goal: absorption of the soul with deity.

The belief of reincarnation stands in contradiction to the biblical doctrine of salvation. Biblical Christianity is opposed to the reincarnational way of reality. By contrast Christianity asserts that humanity has fallen into sin and is unable to help itself, that there is, therefore, the need for salvation, that God provides atonement for sin, that forgiveness for sin brings freedom from guilt, and that the gift of justification by grace through faith is freely provided by Jesus Christ.

Reincarnationists do not need the once-for-all substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, the God-man, nor the mediating of His merits in the heavenly sanctuary as man's Mediator and High Priest. Reincarnationists do not need to inherit the everlasting kingdom.

They have a counterfeit way of viewing reality with an eternal soul which is contradicted by biblical revelation.

The disavowal of reincarnation on the part of the Christian is rooted in the biblical assertion that "it is appointed for men to die once, and after this comes judgment" (Heb 9:27, NASB). This means that the life lived as a human being is to be a moral life under the lordship of Jesus Christ. After death comes no reincarnation but a just divine judgment.

The Fall and Salvation

Origin of Sin. We started with the question, Is there any need for salvation? We have observed that there are religions and philosophies without any need for salvation, at least any need which man cannot remedy. In contrast to these systems biblical revelation provides a radically different view of reality, of the state of humanity, and of the solutions to the human predicament.

God had created humankind in His own image and placed the first pair at the head of the created order (Gen 1:26-28). Mankind was created as the crown of creation and placed in a unique relationship to the loving Creator. Once man had been created God pronounced His creation to be "very good" (Gen 1:31).

Unspeakable tragedy beset this "very good" creation. It came from the Spoiler. Satan tempted Adam and Eve through a surrogate. Tragically, they fell into sin, rebelling against their benevolent Creator. With the fall of the first human pair, who had been created sinless and who had been warned not to eat the forbidden fruit, sin entered into this world (Gen 3), transforming humans and leaving its mark as well on the earthly creation. The animal world changed and the ground was cursed. For their own benefit Adam and Eve had to leave the garden in Eden.

The first pair had been given the freedom of choice. Ellen G. White states: "[God] did not deprive them of the power of eating the forbidden fruit. He left them as free moral agents to believe His word, obey His commandments, and live, or believe the tempter, disobey, and perish."¹⁰ They chose the way of independence, disobedience, alienation, sin and death.

Elements of Sin. The narrative of the fall (Gen 3) leaves no doubt that all the essential elements of sin are present in this rich

chapter, without the use of any major biblical term for sin. Sin intruded our world through a deception perpetrated by Satan, employing the medium of the serpent. "Sin comes into the world not by a series of individual falls but by the one historical fall"¹¹ of Adam and Eve. With this act of rebellion at the beginning sin became a reality that "embraces all people without exception."¹²

In Genesis 3 sin is depicted basically as rebellion against God and His rulership as is shown in Adam and Eve's deliberate decision to go against the will of their Creator. Therefore, sin may be properly defined as disobedience to God's law, since the first pair refused to obey the divinely given commandment not to eat from a specified tree. Sin involves pride in that the first humans wished to be like God, to make their own moral choices on their own terms.

Sin shows up as distrust. Our first parents believed the voice that claimed their Maker had selfish reasons for not allowing them to know the difference between good and evil. The root of sin is covetousness and pride in that Adam and Eve allowed their minds to think they needed to know all that God knew. It is tinctured with discontent, because Adam and Eve were not satisfied with their assigned place as vicegerents over the earth and all that it contains.

God is not the originator of sin. He is not responsible for sin. Sin originated with Satan in heaven before man's creation.¹³ "The one who practices sin is of the devil" (1 John 3:8, NASB).

Biblical root ideas that depict sin are rebellion against God, separation from God, disobedience to divine laws, pride of self, covetousness over against God, distrust in God, discontent, and the like. All of this is present in Genesis 3, the chapter that recounts the fall.

Sin is not simply a disease. A disease can be healed; and does not need a Savior. A disease needs a physician and medicine. A disease can be caused by viruses and other agents, but the figure does not imply what Scripture depicts time and again as the cause of sin. Thus, sin is more than a disease. Sin surely may cause disease, but it is wrongly defined as a disease.

Moreover, sin is not merely a frame of mind, but it surely has framed our mind. Sin is not just an attitude, but it has clearly determined our attitude. Sin is a violation of God's revealed will and word.

Anyone who has a soft view of sin, minimizing its dreadfulness, its perversion of things divine, and its pervasiveness will also have a soft view of salvation. Where there is a limited understanding of sin, there will be a limited understanding of salvation. When sin is comprehended in its monstrous evil dimensions, then and then alone can salvation be seen in its fullest and most glorious dimensions as it operates to solve all aspects of the human dilemma. Salvation will ultimately result in the destruction of sin and its power over human beings.

Sin touches every aspect of human life and existence. It is not simply a lack of something or a deficiency of some sort. Sin is more than a failure. Sin is rebellion against anything that derives from God. Sin is as far distant from God as is the east from the west.

Terminology for Sin. We are wise to refer briefly to the three major terms for sin in the Old Testament. The Hebrew term *cht*, "to miss (a goal or mark), to be at fault, to offend, to be mistaken, to be found deficient or lacking, to be guilty, to sin,"¹⁴ is the most widely employed root word for sin.

The second Hebrew root word for sin is *psh*, "to rebel, to revolt."¹⁵ It is often rendered "to transgress." The word-group which derives from this root is employed more than 135 times. It means transgression in the sense of "rebellious acts."

The third major Hebrew term for sin is the noun *'awôn*, "offense, iniquity, error," and reflects in its 231 usages an "activity that is crooked or wrong."¹⁶

There are another twenty or so Hebrew words used for sin in addition to these three major words and the groups of terms that derive from them.¹⁷ These clusters of terms and their relations reveal that sin is not cast into the context of disease or the like in the Old Testament.

The New Testament writers used words for "sin" also in the sense of an "activity or stance which is opposed to God."¹⁸ The major Greek term in the New Testament is *hamartia*. With its cognates it means "sin, sinners, to sin." Sin is separation from God. Sin, in the sense of alienation, is not comprehensive enough. Sin is also "lawlessness" (Greek *anomia*) as is maintained in 1 John 3:4.

There are about eight additional Greek terms which define sin in the New Testament such as *paraptoma*, "trespass;" *parabasis*,

"transgression;" *parakoe*, "disobedience;" *adikia*, "unrighteousness;" *asebeia*, "impiety, ungodliness;" *kakia*, "wickedness;" *poneros*, "evil;" and *opheiletes*, "offender."¹⁹ It is striking that no term identifies sin with disease.

All Have Sinned. The consistent picture of the Bible is sin's universal extent. Adam and Eve became sinners through the historical act and fact of the fall. Through their rebellious act sin has come to all humans. In the letter to the Roman it is asserted: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23, KJV). Scripture affirms, ". . . through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Rom 5:12, NASB). The result of sin is death.

Natural World Affected by Sin. The effects of sin are not restricted to humanity. The entire natural world was touched. This picture is present in Genesis 3 in which the disobedience and rebellion of humans is shown to have fractured the created order and disrupted nature. The entire narrative from Genesis 3-11 recounts the growth of sin which finally led God to destroy mankind and the marred antediluvian world (Gen 6-9). Inspiration states: "The creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, . . . the creation itself will also be set free from its slavery to corruption . . . for we know that the whole creation groans and suffers . . ." (Rom 8:20-22, NASB). Even the natural creation waits for salvation and freedom from sin.

Inasmuch as sin has disrupted not only the individual but also mankind's relationship with God, with each other, and with the created world, there is great need for salvation from sin's pervasive domination. Divine salvation overcomes these sin-produced fractures, ruptures, disruptions, alienations and estrangements.

Thus, sin has both anthropological dimensions—dealing with the fallen, sinful, guilt-ridden state of mankind—and cosmological dimensions—dealing with a corrupted, suffering, agonizing world that is hurting from the increasing effects of sin.

The dimensions of sin and its results are universal and comprehensive. The dimensions of salvation, however, are even more so. We have seen time and again that salvation is no narrow concept; it is comprehensive and all-inclusive and superabundant.

The Way of Salvation

Let us reflect on major aspects of the way of salvation itself as revealed in Scripture. When we speak of salvation in a general religious sense we must recall that the great religions of the past and present either do not have a concept of salvation or perceive salvation in ways that are opposed in the Bible. We will see that there is no other way to be saved except through Jesus Christ. "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, NRSV).²⁰ Before we pursue this subject in some detail we will do well to address the issue of universalism.

Universalism

Students of ancient Near Eastern religions are aware that Egypt, the very nation out of which God called the enslaved Israelites, did not have a concept of salvation. The ancient Egyptians did not even have a word for "salvation."²¹ The Egyptians, whose pharaoh resisted so tenaciously the release of the Israelites, believed that humans are integrated in the existing world order itself.²² At death the person becomes a star which joins the polar stars, in order to exist forever.²³ In ancient Egypt there was a universalism of after-life for all. Thus, universalism of future life is as old as ancient Egypt. Is there anything new under the sun?

We turn from the past pagan religion of the Egyptians to living religions in the world today. Whether eastern or non-eastern, most of them believe (in one form or another) that salvation is "the ultimate destiny of all humans (or of all living beings)."²⁴ We will return to this theme again, but let us pursue for the moment the concept of universal salvation which holds that all humans will be saved.

Belief in the universal salvation of all souls may be nearly as old as Christianity itself. Universal salvation of all humans has been associated with early Gnostic teachers, a heretical sect of the latter part of the 1st century A.D.

In Christianity the first clearly universalistic writings date from the early Greek Church fathers, most notably Clement of Alexandria, his student Origen, and Gregory of Nyssa. Origen held that even the devil may finally be saved. Origen's theology was

declared heretical in the fifth Ecumenical Council of A.D. 553. In medieval times universalism was hardly known or taught.

Martin Luther and John Calvin, the great Protestant reformers of the 16th century, roundly rejected the final salvation of all human beings. But some Anabaptists such as Hans Denck and Hans Hut promoted the teaching, but it did not become a major doctrine in later Anabaptist theology.

The teaching of the universal salvation of humans continued to be revived here and there during the 17th to the 19th centuries. Several universalist groups developed, particularly in England and the United States. By the time the 20th century arrived, universalism had become "a liberal faith."²⁵ It is manifested in the Unitarian Universalist tradition²⁶ and in other entities.

It may be a surprise to some that the Swiss theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968), a leader of the so-called liberal "dialectical theology" and the major proponent of neoorthodoxy²⁷ is credited with holding and promoting universal salvation for all human beings. "Although he did not teach final salvation directly, certain passages in his massive *Church Dogmatics* stress the irresistible triumph of God's grace. Barth was led in this direction," states D. B. Eller, "by the doctrine of double predestination. In Christ, the representative of all men, adoption and reprobation merge [argues Barth]. There are not two groups—one saved and the other damned. Mortal man may still be sinner, but the election of Christ demands a final judgment of salvation."²⁸

Universalism has much appeal at present, even among certain otherwise respected theologians.²⁹ Biblical Christianity has to ask the question whether it is a Biblical teaching that all human being will in the end be saved.

Some churches believe that there is a "second chance" either during the millennium or at some other time. But does Scripture really teach that all human beings will be saved at some time or another?

Scriptural Salvation

We must turn our attention now to the Bible in order to capture its view of salvation. We will first attempt to examine the

Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, to discover major biblical outlines of salvation.

The Promised Savior (Gen 3:15)

The very chapter that recounts the fall of humankind in Genesis 3 contains the first promise of salvation. Genesis 3:15 reads within the context of the divine judgment upon the serpent,

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel" (NASB).

This text has been called by the Church the "protevangelium," or the "first gospel," the "first good news."³⁰ It is the Magna Charta of salvation. This, however, is not the meaning which modern liberal, critical scholars cull from the text. There is considerable debate among historical-critical scholars as to its exact meaning, but they are agreed in rejecting the Messianic and prophetic nature of the promise of Genesis 3:15.³¹

Liberal, that is, historical-critical scholars prefer an interpretation that is etiological in nature. Genesis 3:15 is to explain some reality in the experience of human beings. This means that this text is non-Messianic; it has nothing to do with the Messiah or the like. Instead the "enmity" between the serpent and the woman merely describes etiological the origin of an alleged perpetual antagonism between humans and snakes!³²

Many interpreters, on the other hand, understand this text to be Messianic in import and intention.³³ It had been supposed that only Christians understood this text to be Messianic. But this view can no longer be supported. It may be an exciting discovery that this first prediction in the Bible was understood Messianically even before the New Testament came into existence! The first translation of the Old Testament, known as the Septuagint (LXX, 3rd-2nd century B.C.), rendered this prediction in a Messianic sense.³⁴

The Hebrew pronoun *hû'* is usually rendered "it" in English translations,³⁵ although there are some translations which render it with "he" (cf. NASB). The Septuagint translators rendered the Hebrew *hû'* with "he" (*autós* in Greek) even though the term refers back to the neuter noun "seed" (Greek, *spérma*) a situation which

would normally call for the neuter "it" (Greek, *autó*). This is the only time in the entire book of Genesis where the Septuagint translators render *hû'* in this manner. Evidently the Septuagint translators understood Genesis 3:15 to be Messianic in nature.³⁶

If Genesis 3:15 is Messianic in its original intent,³⁷ then we have here a statement, the first statement in the Bible, of the Savior to come. The prediction that the "serpent" would bruise Him on the heel, that is, bruise the "seed of the woman," the Messiah that was to come and was to be born of a woman, indicates that He would be the Victor in the battle with Satan. Although hurt, the Messiah would ultimately destroy Satan, because He crushes the serpent's head.

Jesus is bitten in the heel with the deadly bite of the Serpent, Satan. The Savior dies in place of sinners, achieving salvation for humankind. And in so doing He crushes the Serpent's head. (The Hebrew has here the masculine singular suffix "you" [NASB], indicating that the serpent is not understood collectively). This gospel of salvation is provided as a prediction from the mouth of God Himself and presented to the first human pair in the garden in Eden after they had fallen into sin.

Genesis 3:15 reveals the central point of the plan of salvation: the substitutionary death of the Messiah who was to come. He would die in behalf of and for man; He would die in the place of man; He would die so that man through His death could have salvation and new life. There is but one possible way of salvation and that is through the One who is the "seed of the woman."

The view that the death of Christ is merely and only an example for man is not in harmony with the plain teaching of Scripture. The position that Christ is but a representative for man misses the most essential aspect of salvation as depicted throughout the Bible. Such limitations, based on a singular emphasis of Christ as representative of man, belittle Christ's achievements.

Salvation by Substitution

The Bible teaches time and again that salvation is achieved by substitution. While we cannot give a comprehensive exposition of salvific substitution in the Bible, few major aspects must be noted.³⁸

The Sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22:1-19). Our attention goes first to

one of the greatest passages of world literature as revealed and preserved by God in Genesis 22.

The Lord gave a mind-boggling command to Abraham, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, . . . and offer him . . . as a burnt offering . . ." (Gen 22:2, NASB).

After three agonizing days and a final "good by," at the very point when Abraham seized the knife, the divine voice came again, stopping the father from executing what had already taken place proleptically in his heart. As Abraham looked up, he saw a ram caught in the thicket by its horns. Then the text reads, "He took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt offering *in the place of* his son" (vs. 13, NASB). The ram died as a substitute for his son. It was slain "in place of"³⁹ his son. It was slain so that the son could live.

"The victim was a substitute,"⁴⁰ pointing forward to the great Substitute to come. Paul seems to refer to this experience in Genesis when he writes that God, the Father, "did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us" (Rom 8:32, NRSV).⁴¹

Sacrificial Laying on of Hands. Detailed instruction for the burnt offering in connection with the laying on of hands is provided in Leviticus 1. The burnt offering was the basic offering in the Hebrew sacrificial system. The substitutionary idea is clearly expressed in the instruction: "And he shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, that it may be accepted *for him* to make atonement on his behalf" (Lev 1:4, NASB). The two little words "for him" render the Hebrew text in a literal fashion.⁴² The words "for him," also rendered "on his behalf,"⁴³ present themselves as a clear indication of substitution in the regulations of the daily sacrifices in the book of Leviticus.

We may recognize also that in the laying on of hands⁴⁴ on the head of the sacrificial victim the offerer indicates that it is his substitute.⁴⁵ "The idea that comes to expression in the laying on of hands is thus that of substitution (see Lev 16:21-22; 24:14 . . .)."⁴⁶ While there are alternative suggestions, there are numerous scholars to the present who maintain that there is substitution intended in the gesture of laying on of hands on the sacrificial victim.⁴⁷ A. Rodriguez has concluded from his investigation of sacrifices and the idea of substitution that "in the expiatory sacrifices the idea of

transfer of sin is basic, and that it is always accompanied by the idea of sacrificial substitution."⁴⁸

We must note that the sacrificial services instituted by God in the Hebrew cultic system, and particularly the sacrificial animal which died as a substitute for the offerer, could not be an adequate substitute. Sacrificial animals were but powerful pointers to the real, future Sacrifice that was to come to bring atonement once-and-for-all for the sins of humanity. "Now once at the consummation He [Christ] has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb 9:26, NASB).

The Suffering Servant's Vicarious Death (Isa 53). The book of Isaiah has a passage on the Suffering Servant (Isa 52:13-53:12) in which the Servant functions as a vicarious substitute.⁴⁹ It is clearly expressed in Isaiah 53:6: "But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him" (NASB). One of the famous commentators of our time has stated quite unabashedly that the revolutionary new idea is that "the substitutionary or atoning power of human suffering is discovered in a . . . human being whose deforming affliction brings to him rejection and abhorrence."⁵⁰ Scripture certainly informs us in this chapter that it is a human Servant that is to suffer in behalf of humankind and in their stead. Verse 5 reads that He was crushed "for our iniquities" with the result that "by His scourging we are healed" (vs. 5d, NASB). In verse 11 the NRSV reads faithfully reflecting the Hebrew text, "The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous and he shall bear their iniquities." Christ is the Sin-bearer.

The Old Testament pointed forward to the Lamb to come that would be led to the slaughter in behalf and in place of the sinner. In Isaiah 53:5 the reader is told that the Servant "was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities . . . And by His scourgings we are healed" (NASB).

The last phrase is particularly interesting. This phrase needs to be rendered with precision on the basis of the original text, "In exchange for⁵¹ his stripes [Hebrew *bchbrtw*] we were healed."⁵² There is no doubt here on the basis of the sentence structure that substitution is intended. The Servant is to suffer vicariously so that "we" sinners "in exchange for" or "at the cost of" his stripes/wounds are healed.

Thus, Isaiah 53:5 contains full-dimensional salvation from Him who bore our punishment vicariously so that "we" are freed from the punishment and wrath of God. "He bore the suffering in their place."⁵³ The healing "we" experience is the salvation from the pain, suffering, misery, anguish, alienation, separation and the like caused by sin ("transgressions" and "iniquities").

We have not exhausted the full dimensions of salvation through the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53. There is much more in Isaiah 53 that deserves our attention.⁵⁴ But the picture of substitution and vicarious suffering is already established and abundantly clear. Through the Servant of the Lord there will be salvation, and through none other. John 1:29 rings in our ears, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" (KJV).

These are but a few indicators of the Old Testament teaching of salvation as achieved by substitution. Man is unable to save himself. In biblical faith there can be no self-induced salvation; no salvation can be achieved by man on his own. Salvation is a gift of God, bestowed upon man by One who is the full and complete Substitute for him.

Jesus' Death a Ransom for Many. Our Lord explains that the Son of Man will "give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45, NRSV).⁵⁵ Our first interest concerns the expression "for many." It is an expression used in the New Testament in connection with the saving work of Jesus Christ (cf. Mark 10:45/Matt 20:28; Mark 14:24/Matt 26:28; Rom 5:15, 16; Heb 9:28). The statement "for many" in the salvific activity of Christ expresses inclusively that Jesus saving work includes all, the entire human family.⁵⁶ It is generally agreed that Mark 10:45 (and 14:24) is based on Isaiah 53.⁵⁷ Isaiah 53 speaks five times of the "many" and forms the background also of this saying from Jesus in Mark 10:45. "The idea of ransom (*lutron*) alludes to the offering for sin in Isaiah 53:10, . . ."⁵⁸

What does the word "ransom" mean in this key word of Jesus? Much has been written on this word.⁵⁹ "Ransom" was a word used for the price paid to free a prisoner of war or a slave or someone under the sentence of death."⁶⁰ The context of this saying of Jesus

reveals that Jesus pays the price of salvation from sin and the way of life rooted in sin.

In Mark 10:45 Jesus makes clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that he takes the role of the Servant of Isaiah 53, and that he explains the meaning of his death. His death has to be understood as a ransom-price which he paid "for many" in the sense of all humanity.

F. Büchsel shows that the word "for" (Greek, *anti*) in the phrase "for many" (Mark 10:45) refers to substitution. He states that "*anti* means 'for' in the sense of 'in place of' rather than 'to the advantage of'."⁶¹ Thus, the word "for" (*anti*) has here "substitutionary force."⁶² It is argued that "even if the *anti* be translated 'to the advantage of,' the death of Jesus means that there happens to Him what would have happened to the many. Hence He takes their place."⁶³ Evidently Jesus Himself teaches that He would die a substitutionary death, that He would die in place of humankind, paying the price that no human could pay for his or her sin. Christ's death in place of humankind is vicarious, substitutionary, voluntary, and all-encompassing.

Jesus' Blood of the Covenant. Shortly before the crucifixion, Jesus explained even more explicitly the meaning of His death. In the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus said, "This is my blood of the covenant,"⁶⁴ which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt 26:28, NRSV). This saying is also found in Mark 14:24.

Once more Jesus used the word "many" in the same inclusive sense of the totality of all mankind that embraces many individuals.⁶⁵ It has the same intention as in Mark 14:24.

The word "for" in Mark 14:24 is the Greek term *hupér*, meaning "on behalf of" when followed as it is in this text (cf. 1 Cor 11:24; Luke 22:20) by a genitive.⁶⁶ The word "for" in Matthew 26:28 translates the preposition *perí* which is said to be synonymous to *hupér* in meaning.⁶⁷ The usage of the other preposition (*peri*) for the word "for" in the Gospel of Matthew may be caused by its reflection to the wording of the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53:4⁶⁸ where it is stated in the Septuagint that He suffered pain "for" us.

What does Jesus Christ say regarding what He does in behalf of or in place of the "many"? He states, "My blood . . . poured out

for many for the forgiveness of sins." In a substitutionary fashion our Lord shed His blood in order that mankind can gain forgiveness of sins. What a mind-boggling revelation? By the shedding of blood, by His own death, in behalf for and in place of sinners, our Lord has made expiation for sin so that the sins of repentant sinners may be forgiven. Every time a follower of Jesus partakes of the Lord's Supper he/she is reminded that sins are forgiven by no other means than by Jesus' sacrificial death in which He chose to shed His blood in our behalf. "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Heb 9:22, RSV).

In view of this clear expression of the way of salvation, how is it possible for some preachers, theologians, and others to claim that the shedding of blood was not needed for salvation? The salvific purpose of blood has its greatest significance in relation to communicating the soteriological purpose of the death of Jesus Christ. Such expressions as the "blood of Christ" (1 Cor 10:16; Eph 2:13; Heb 9:14), "Jesus Christ . . . His blood" (1 Pet 1:2), the "blood of Jesus" (1 John 1:7; Heb 10:19), the "blood of the Lord" (1 Cor 11:27) and the "blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14; 12:11) express the violent death of the Savior. We can hardly conceive that this interest in the "blood of Jesus Christ" is focussed on the material substance of His blood. The emphasis rests forcefully on His shed and poured out blood in the sense of the giving up of His life on the one hand and the violent taking of His life by crucifixion on the other.

The "blood of Christ" which was thus shed—the life was thus given—assures the gift of the "new covenant" recorded in Jeremiah 31:31-34 where the Lord promised to write His law on the hearts of human beings and to forgive their sins. Substitution in the Bible means that Jesus dies in the place of human sinners, so that they go free from the condemnation and guilt of sin and its results. But saved and forgiven sinners do not simply go free to live and to do as they wish. Human beings who are saved by Jesus' own death are summoned to join Jesus, to live with Jesus, to be part of His family and to live in harmony with His law of liberty. The glory of salvation in the Bible is linked to the blood of Christ and to holy living. The saved are set free and empowered to do the will of the Master by the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. He writes His law on their

hearts, enabling them to be genuine new covenant believers and doers.

Other NT Passages. The message of Christ death "for our sins" is pervasive in the writings of Paul. He affirms that Jesus "was handed over to death for our trespasses and he was raised for our justification" (Rom 4:25, NRSV). He explains that God did not withhold his Son but "gave him up for all of us" (Rom 8:32, NRSV) and gratefully acknowledged that Christ chose to "[give] himself up for me" (Gal 2:20, NRSV). This theme is even more pronounced in Ephesians: "Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5:2, NRSV).

The Pauline emphasis is that Jesus Christ takes the place of every sacrifice of the Old Testament. For example: "For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed" (1 Cor 5:7, NRSV). Christ's death was the death of the true paschal lamb, an antitypical Passover sacrifice, through which we may have life. His death is also seen as a new covenant sacrifice in 1 Corinthians 11:25.⁶⁹ In some passages Christ's death is presented as an expiatory sacrifice (Rom 8:3, 4; 2 Cor 5:21) which means that He is the antitype of the "sin offering" (Hebrew, *chattat*, Lev 4:3, 14).⁷⁰ He is also the Day of Atonement sacrifice as Romans 3:25 seems to imply.⁷¹ Here Christ Jesus is "put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood" (Rom 3:25, NRSV). The new rendering, "sacrifice of atonement," stands for the Greek term *hilasterion*, often rendered as "propitiation" (NASB, etc.).⁷²

These passages, to which many others could be added, communicate that Jesus Christ has accomplished an atoning work "for us." In Christ all the Old Testament cultic sacrifices have found their fulfillment. He is the Passover sacrifice, the sin offering, the new covenant sacrifice and the Day of Atonement sacrifice. Thus all Old Testament cultic celebrations are superseded, the Old Testament sanctuary/temple services have been fulfilled, and Christ is now able to engage in His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary as Mediator, Priest and High Priest "for us" (Heb 9:24; 1 Tim 2:5).

Salvation and Atonement

Few teachings of Christian faith have caused greater diversity, even contradiction, than that of atonement. Over the centuries famous theologians have developed various theories of atonement.

These will not have the focus of our discussion at this time. We will first review some key points of salvation in the biblical record. We will then relate this biblical view to one of the most widely held atonement theory held today.

Salvation Through Jesus Christ Alone

God Provides Salvation. There is a comprehensive sentence about salvation in Psalm 35:3: "I am your salvation" (NASB) as it is literally translated. The Psalm reveals in this proclamation of salvation⁷³ that the great "I Am" is the One from whom salvation (Hebrew, *yeshu'ah*) derives.⁷⁴ This Old Testament "I am" (Hebrew, *'ant*) saying is identical in meaning with Jonah's confession in the belly of the great fish where, at the end of his rope, he cried out, "Salvation is from the LORD" (Jonah 2:9, NASB). The noun in Jonah 2:9 is *yeshû'atah* and is properly translated as "salvation,"⁷⁵ although some soften its meaning in English.⁷⁶ Jonah expresses the idea that the Lord is the *source* of salvation, and that He has the *strength* of salvation, and that He is the only One who can *grant* salvation.⁷⁷

Jesus Christ: Humanity's Only Savior and Redeemer. Every foreshadowing, every type, every prophecy, every promise made in the Old Testament about the Messiah-Savior to come is affirmed in Jesus Christ and His saving work. In fact it was none other than Christ Himself who showed the wavering and wondering disciples all things about Himself. On the way to Emmaus Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, showed His disciples "beginning with Moses and with all the prophets . . . the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27, NASB).

Jesus proclaims, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6, KJV; cf. Isa 43:11). Thus, there is only one single way to reach God. While it may be true that all roads lead to Rome, there is but one way that leads to Heaven. It is the small and narrow way, the way Jesus our Lord has walked. But in the larger sense He Himself is the Way of God.

In the same passage (John 14:6) Jesus make one of his great "I Am" (Greek, *ego eimi*) statements of self-revelation: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (NASB). There is but one way for humans to the

Father, and it is "through" Christ. Whoever goes another way misses the goal which is sought: Jesus is the only way to God, because He is the supreme Revealer and Savior in whom the truth and the life, the reality of God in man, has taken shape in His saving grace.⁷⁸

There is an exclusivity in the self-claim by Jesus that He is "the Way." If He is "the Way," then it has to be concluded that there is no other way. Jesus is "the Way" to the Father. Jesus is the way to salvation.

Jesus is the only Way by which we can be received into Heaven when He returns in the Parousia, with all His holy angels (Matt 24:30, 31). We have to think of the affirmation in John 14 where Jesus says, "in my Father's house are many dwelling places" (vs. 2, NASB). These words are definitely eschatological, looking forward to the Second Coming. Verse 3 reads, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to Myself" (NASB).

No Other Name. Our final attention must be devoted to a major statement from the apostle Peter: "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, NASB). It has been recognized that "salvation could not be gained through Judaism but only through Jesus."⁷⁹

Peter speaks of a *sola Christi*, "Christ alone." Peter's statement sums up the whole message of the Bible. Here is the way another well known commentator puts it, "And from the once despised but now glorified Jesus, and from Him alone, could true salvation come—not merely healing from a physical affliction, . . . but from the spiritual disease of sin and deliverance from the coming judgment as well . . . No such deliverance could be hoped for from any other quarter or by the power of any other name: the name of Jesus, . . ."⁸⁰

The only conclusion to be drawn is that Peter "makes an absolute and universal claim for the Christian message of salvation."⁸¹ This salvation includes both physical and spiritual salvation.⁸²

The word "must" in the last phrase ("By which [name] we must be saved") is very specific in the Greek language, *dei*, "must."⁸³ The phrase does not say that "we can be saved." This would imply

that humans have the innate or inherent ability to achieve salvation. Neither does the phrase say that we “may be saved.” That would communicate uncertainty. The text is specific, definitive and exclusive. “The word *must* reveals a divine necessity which God has established, according to his plan and decree, to save us through the person and work of Jesus Christ.”⁸⁴ The word “must” as it relates to salvation expresses in a most forceful way the divine intention to save mankind in this and in no other way. Humanity “has no recourse to salvation other than through the Son of God.”⁸⁵ Jesus Christ is the only, the unique Savior. Scripture maintains that there is no salvation outside of Jesus Christ.

Salvation and the Moral Influence Theory

There is one theory of the atonement (among the many) which has gained a very wide following in certain circles—and to some degree even among some Adventists—in a variety of forms. It is known in the history of Christian thought as the “moral influence theory.” Historically, it goes back centuries to Peter Abelard (1079-1142). Some people refer to it as the “subjective view” of the atonement.⁸⁶

Origin. Peter Abelard has been depicted as a precursor of modern free thought with a “spirit [that] was essentially critical.”⁸⁷ He approached faith with new methods and “sought to understand faith by the use of reason.”⁸⁸ With his emphasis on reason it is no surprise that his views on the Trinity were not acceptable. They were condemned at the Council of Soissons in A.D. 1121 because of their affinity with Sabellianism, an antitrinitarian theory. Twenty years later several of his propositions selected from his works were condemned at the Council of Sens (A.D. 1141).

The Theory’s Appeal. The “moral influence theory” in its various shapes has great appeal. Professor Leon Morris notes that its attraction is “especially among scholars of the liberal school.”⁸⁹

The theory is built on the love of God as the overarching theme. It holds that “when we look at the cross we see the greatness of the divine love. This delivers us from fear and kindles in us an answering love. We respond to love with love and no longer live in selfishness and sin.”⁹⁰ The drawing power in this theory is love.

Love is made the principle thought regarding God and Christ. The believer is seen as a friend of God and no longer as a “servant.”

There are various ways of expressing the essential idea of the “moral influence theory.” But in whatever way it is expressed, it typically denies the atonement, the substitutionary death of Christ, the idea of His death constituting a sacrifice in behalf and in place of mankind, and the like. Often these biblical pictures are viewed as primitive ideas from the past that many Bible writers still held, but which we moderns can now shed in our advanced age.

The essence of the “moral influence theory” is the manifestation of love in the death of Christ that moves the sinner to repentance and faith as well as higher moral achievements. “If God will do all that for us, we say, then we ought not continue in sin. So we repent and turn from it and are saved by becoming better people. The thrust in all this is on personal experience.”⁹¹ This subjective aspect is important and has its place in a full view of the atonement.

Regardless what shape the “moral influence theory” takes, however, the death of Christ has no effect outside the person who responds to it. This is the reason why the “moral influence theory” is considered to be subjective in nature.

Evaluation of the Theory. There are various basic problems with this widely held theory in its various forms. We cannot discuss all difficulties, but some points that pertain to the subject of salvation in Scripture need to have our attention.

1. There is such an emphasis on love, on a particular kind of love, that there is no longer any room for the Biblical concept of judgment, destruction of the sinner, and the wrath of God.⁹²

The theme of the wrath of God is denied its proper place by the adherents of this theory. This theme needs careful study throughout Scripture, but we can only make brief reference to it here. The “wrath of God” (Rom 1:18; Eph 5:6; Col 3:6) can hardly be dismissed as a reflection of primitive thinking, an accommodation of God, an outdated view of God, or even extra-biblical thinking that crept into the Bible.

The first Christian heretic, Marcion (2nd century), wanted to reshape the entire Bible into a shortened form consisting of a few New Testament books, because he wished to exclude all the books that depicted a God of wrath. Ever since, Christians have had to

confront—from time to time—heretical notions that would shape the Bible according to special interests, impressions, notions, biases and philosophical concerns.

But the wrath of God is an extensive theme of the Bible and cannot be eliminated from its portrayal of God in the salvation and atonement process.⁹³ It simply will not do to assign it to a more primitive or to an older form of understanding and presenting God which is superseded by a picture that only knows a God who loves. Such simplistic attempts are many and continue into the present. They are not faithful to the biblical testimony at hand.

In the Bible divine wrath is hardly a mere figure of speech which expresses human emotions which are ascribed to God. If the picture of the wrath (not anger) of God is indeed a reality in the being of God, there is, however, no evidence that it will be expressed in eternity. It is precipitated by sin. "If there were no sin there would be no wrath."⁹⁴

The Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ makes it clear that there is a separation of mankind into two groups. The fall has made all humanity into "children of wrath" (Eph 2:3), or sinners. But repentant sinners are freed from the wrath of God when they accept the divine salvation Christ achieved on the cross (1 Thess 1:10; 5:9; Rom 5:9). They are forgiven sinners and function as redeemed believers no more under God's wrath.

The second group consists of the impenitent who remain under the wrath of God as "children of wrath" because they despise the divine kindness of salvation (Rom 2:4, 5, 8; 9:22, 23) and remain "disobedient" (Eph 5:6; Col 3:6). This language is not primitive or antiquated. It truly reflects the two groups of human beings.

There will be a time "when the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:10) will be manifested in the eschatological judgment on impenitent sinners. The "wrath to come" is not an impersonal process of cause and effect whereby sinners, left to themselves, so it is claimed by supporters of the "moral influence theory," come to self-destruction.⁹⁵ To the contrary, the New Testament fully describes God exercising His control in the end by destroying Satan and the wicked who have followed him.

The manifestation of God's wrath is not the "irrational passion of anger,"⁹⁶ nor is it vindictive. But it is God's expression of

His holy judgment on sin, its power and ugliness. This destruction is the "alien" act of God (Isa 28:21). A God who does not deal with the sin problem and its final eradication is a failure.

God's wrath is to be understood in relationship to his love and holiness. Both love and holiness are essential characteristics of His being. Therefore, wrath is the expression of God toward that which is opposed to His love and holiness. Unless wrath is a part of God's reality, there is no need for atonement and substitution and the cross the way the Bible presents it. This is why liberal theology has changed and reinterpreted all of these essential biblical ideas, emptying them of their essential contents as biblical revelation presents them.

2. The New Testament concept of "propitiation" as expressed by the Greek *hilaskomai* word-group goes beyond love to another dimension of the atonement achieved by God through Christ, namely divine wrath (Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). The love of God certainly shines through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross at every stage. It surely speaks of love to arouse love in the believers.⁹⁷ It has been shown, however, that the "propitiation" word-group includes that idea of averting the "wrath of God."⁹⁸ This "is not the pagan idea that an angry god may be appeased by sacrifice: for God himself provides the means of propitiation and justification."⁹⁹

3. The entire biblical concept of an objective, substitutionary death of Christ in behalf of man argues against the "moral influence theory" and its adequacy for explaining what was achieved in the sacrificial death of Christ. Christ died on the cross for more reasons than just to be an example. "If Christ was not actually doing something by his death, then we are confronted with a piece of showmanship, nothing more."¹⁰⁰

Christ really died in the place of and in behalf of sinners regardless of how sinners relate to it. In Mark 14:24 Jesus provides the words of institution of the Lord's Supper by saying, "This is my blood of the covenant which is poured out for many" (NRSV). This text has been analyzed previously, and we have seen its importance for the idea of substitution. It has been shown that "Jesus expresses with the phrase ["for many"] that he understands himself as the one who dies the substitutionary death of the Servant of God [of Isa 53]."¹⁰¹

The passage in Matthew 20:28 speaks of "the Son of Man [who] came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (NRSV). The substitutionary death concept is present once again¹⁰² as we had seen above in the ransom idea. The "many" refer once more to the whole of humankind without limitation¹⁰³ as is also the case in Isaiah 53:12 which is referred to also in John 1:29. Christ died for all ("many" in its technical sense) but unfortunately only a "few" accept what He did for them.

4. If Christ died on the cross as merely an example or representative so that man may emulate His love (as held by those who hold in some form or another to the "moral influence theory"), then the entire biblical idea of an objective death of Christ, needed to solve the sin problem, is nullified. The real essence of the death of Christ is His vicarious and substitutionary work as the very God-man, living the obedient life we ought to live and dying the death as the penalty for sin we ought to die. His achievements in His life and death are ours by faith in Him. Christ did what no human being could ever do.

Conclusions

Genuine Bible-believing Christians stay faithful to the total teachings of the Bible which are in all their variety and richness harmonious and fully inspired. They will vigorously resist the temptation at reductionism. They will refuse any reinterpretation of biblical evidence on salvation. No one can improve on what God has revealed through His servants, the prophets, and by Christ in the Word of God.

A comprehensive and full biblical picture of salvation and atonement of which we could give only glimpses in this essay contains (1) an objective atonement achieved by God in Christ's sacrificial death on the cross in which (2) He vicariously died in behalf of all humankind as (3) our Substitute, in our place, (4) through which He propitiated by His blood Divine justice—something no human could ever achieve by himself and live on. (5) Christ provided the supreme demonstration of the love of God which fills us with gratitude and wonder at His mercy and grace. (6) Christ also provided through His substitutionary sacrifice the means for humankind to live in harmony with God and fellow human beings.

Christ—by means of his life, death and resurrection—created the possibility for humans to live victoriously in freedom from sin in submission to our loving God under the power of the Holy Spirit. In Christ's ongoing heavenly ministry our High Priest continues to forgive us when we fall into sin, confess and repent. He does so on the basis of His blood that He shed for us on Calvary. Thus, there is no need for any believer to be disheartened, but all of us can rejoice in Christ for the "better hope" that He has brought about and through which "we draw near to God" (Heb 7:19, NASB). When God's true children are judged in the pre-Advent judgment, they will not experience divine wrath but divine vindication because of what Christ has achieved in the past and in their lives. They rely in everything on Christ and the Power through which He was able to achieve.

Praise be to God our Father who has given His only begotten Son in behalf of us and for us, so that we, all of us, have the privilege to be in possession of salvation in Jesus through His blood. We praise also Jesus Christ through whose name we "must be saved," since "there is salvation in no one else" (Acts 4:12, NASB). All glory belongs to Him. We rejoice in our God and in our Lord Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit who applies the provisions of salvation daily anew to us. Maranatha!

Endnotes

*This was Dr. Hasel's Presidential Address delivered on April 17, 1992, at the International Adventist Theological Society Convention, Loma Linda, California. It was slightly revised for publication.

1 J. Schneider and C. Brown, "Redemption," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. C. Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 3:216.

2 G. G. O'Collins, "Salvation," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 5:907, 910; J. F. A. Sawyer, *The Semantics of Biblical Research: New Methods of Defining Hebrew Words for Salvation* (London: SCM Press, 1972).

3 Oscar Cullmann, *Immortality of the Soul and Resurrection of the Dead* (London, 1958); K. Stendahl, ed., *Immortality and Resurrection* (New York, 1965).

4 R. M. Enroth, "Reincarnation," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), p. 926.

5 "Reincarnation," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia* 15th ed. (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1980), 8:488.

6 S. Kent Brown, "Souls, Preexistence of," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:161.

7 C. T. J., "Theosophy," *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia* (15th ed.; Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1980), 18:276-80.

8 Enroth, p. 926.

9 Typical for a giant among the liberal theologians of the twentieth century in conceptualizing God as "Ultimate Reality," is Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 3 vols. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951-63).

10 Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption* (Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publ. Assoc., 1947), p. 37.

11 G. W. Bromiley, "Sin," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 4:519.

12 Ibid.

13 On the mystery of the origin of sin, see the excellent chapter in Ellen G. White, *The Story of Redemption*, pp. 13-19.

14 William L. Holladay, Jr., ed., *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 100.

15 Holladay, p. 300.

16 Holladay, p. 268.

17 See Robin C. Cover, "Sin, Sinners (OT)," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed., David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:32.

18 E. P. Sanders, "Sin, Sinners (NT)," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed., David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:40.

19 See W. Bauder, "Sin," *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 3:573-578.

20 There is a pervasive trend in recent years to argue that salvation can be found in all the world's religions. Theologians among Catholics are Hans Küng of Germany and David Tracy of the USA. A recent book following this direction is by Francis A. Sullivan, S. J., *Salvation Outside the Church? Tracing the History of the Catholic Response* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1992). Among non-Catholics there are such names as Paul Knitter and John Hick. Recently the Canadian theologian (once a conservative evangelical but on the move to the left) Clark H. Pinnock holds in his new book, *A Wideness in God's Mercy: The Finality of Jesus Christ in a World of Religions* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), that there are "holy pagans" who are saved without having knowledge of the divine revelation given in Scripture.

21 Günter Lanczkowski, "Heil und Erlösung. I. Religionsgeschichtlich," *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1985), 14:606.

22 See Siegfried Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion* (Stuttgart: J. C. B. Mohr, 1960); Helmer Ringgren, *Die Religionen des Alten Orients* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1987), pp. 11-63.

23 The following sentence is found in the Pyramid Texts 878: "You great one among the intransitory stars, you will not go down forever." Cited in Ringgren, p. 61.

24 Ninian Smart, "Soteriology," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York/London: Macmillan, 1987), 13:422.

25 D. B. Eller, "Universalism," *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1985), p. 1129.

26 The "Universalist Unitarian Association" was founded in 1961 and was made up of ca. 70,000 member in around 400 congregations.

27 Another key member of the 20th century theological movement known as neoorthodoxy is Emil Brunner (1889-1966).

28 Eller, p. 1129.

29 See above Pinnock's book, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*, in which he, while opening the door for "holy pagans" to be saved without knowledge of biblical revelation, argues against universalism.

30 E. W. Hengstenberg, *The Christology of the Old Testament* (reprint of the 1854 ed.; MacDill AFB, FL: MacDonald Publishing Company, n.d.), pp. 4-16.

31 For example, M. Görg, "Das Wort zur Schlange (Gen 3,14f.): Gedanken zum sogenannten Protevangelium," *Biblische Notizen* 19 (1982) 121-40; A. Szabo, "Nunquam Retrorsum: Zur Frage des Protevangeliums: Gen 3,15," *Judaica* 35 (1979) 120-24; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984), 258-61, with literature.

32 Westermann, p. 259.

33 See such commentators as H. C. Leupold, Derek Kidner, Gerhardus Vos, G. Ch. Aalders, H. G. A. Stigers, and V. P. Hamilton.

34 R. A. Martin, "The Earliest Messianic Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 84 (1965) pp. 425-27.

35 See M. Woudstra, "Recent Translations of Genesis 3:15," *Calvin Theological Journal* 6 (1971) pp. 194-203.

36 See above Martin and now also Walter C. Kaiser, *Toward and Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing Company, 1978), pp. 36-37.

37 We do not even need to follow William S. LaSor, "Prophecy, Inspiration, and Sensus Plenior," *Tyndale Bulletin* 29 (1978) pp. 49-60, esp. 56-57, who sees here a *sensus plenior* application.

38 See the excellent dissertation by Angel Rodriguez, *Substitution In the Hebrew Cultus* "Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series" (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1980) and his essay "Salvation by Sacrificial Substitution" in this issue of *JATS* 3/2 (1992). I have been much benefitted by these studies.

39 Some versions render the Hebrew *tachat*, "in place of" (so also L. Köhler and W. Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament* [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990], 4:1587), with "instead of" (cf. NRSV) which may be somewhat less precise. Whether one or the other rendering is selected, the idea of substitution is present.

40 D. Kidner, *Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967), 144.

41 So Claus Westermann, *Genesis* "BKAT I/16" (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979), p. 447.

42 The Hebrew has the preposition *lô* which contains the personal pronominal suffix *ô*. This is literally rendered with "for him."

43 A. Noordtjij, *Leviticus* "Bible Student's Commentary" (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982), 32; G. J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* "New International Commentary on the Old Testament" (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979), p. 55.

44 The literature on the subject of laying on of hands in the OT is rich. The following recent publications provide a full view of current opinions, R. Péter, "L'imposition des mains dans l'Ancien Testament," *Vetus Testamentum* 27 (1977), 48-55; F. Stolz, "smk, stützen," *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, eds. E. Jenni und C. Westermann (Zurich: Ev. Verlag, 1977), 2:160-62; B. J.

van der Merwe, "The Laying on of the Hands in the OT," *Die Ou Testamentiese Werksgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika* 5 (1962), pp. 34-43; M. C. Sansom, "Laying on of Hands in the OT," *Expository Times* 94 (1982/83), pp. 323-326; Bernd Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1982), 199-221; H.-J. Fabry, D. P. Wright and J. Milgrom, "samak," *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1986), 5:880-889; D. P. Wright, "The Gesture of Hand Placement in the Hebrew Bible and in Hittite Literature," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 106 (1986), pp. 433-446; idem, "Hands, Laying on," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:47-48.

45 R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus. An Introduction and Commentary* "Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries" (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1980), p. 45.

46 Noordtzi, *Leviticus*, p. 33.

47 We wish to mention only the following without attempting to be exhaustive: Paul Volz, "Die Handauflegung beim Opfer," *Zeitschrift für alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 21 (1901), pp. 93-100; Kurt Elliger, *Leviticus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), pp. 34, 37; Rolf Rendtorff, *Studien zur Geschichte des Opfers im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967), pp. 92-93, 214-216, 232; Klaus Koch, *Die israelische Sühneanschauung und ihre historischen Verwandlungen* (dissertation, University of Erlangen, 1956) and in many of his later publications; A. Medebielle, *L'expiation dans l'Ancien Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1924), pp. 147-158.

48 Rodriguez, *Substitution*, p. 224. See also his article in the this issue of *JATS*.

49 See Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 276-302; idem, "Salvation by Sacrificial Substitution" where he refers to the soteriological dimension of substitution which calls for more than an animal.

50 Claus Westermann, *Das Buch Jesaja* "Das Alte Testament Deutsch" (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966), 212.

51 In the Hebrew language we have here a *beth pretii*, i.e. a *beth* which governs an exchange (cf. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990], p. 197).

52 Following W. Zimmerli, "Zur Vorgeschichte von Jes. LIII," *Congress Volume Rome 1968* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), p. 238, as cited in Rodriguez, p. 281.

53 J. Ridderbos, *Isaiah* "Bible Student's Commentary" (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1985), p. 478.

54 See especially Rodriguez, *Substitution*, pp. 283-301.

55 See Hans LaRondelle, "Salvation and the Atonement," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 3/1 (Spring 1992), pp. 24, 25, for excellent ideas on this passage.

56 Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London, 1959), p. 65.

57 R. H. Fuller, *The Foundation of New Testament Christology* (London, 1965), p. 153; Joachim Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie. Erster Teil: Die Verkündigung Jesu* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1973), pp. 277-279.

58 George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 156.

59 See Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (3rd ed.; Grand

Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 52-55; idem, *The Cross in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 52-55 (with literature).

60 Leon Morris, *New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), p. 110.

61 F. Büchsel, "lútron," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 4:342.

62 Morris, *New Testament Theology*, p. 111.

63 Büchsel, "lútron," 4:343.

64 Other ancient manuscripts read "new covenant." The addition of the word "new" makes sense because whatever is instituted by Christ is new.

65 Joachim Jeremias, "pollot," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), 6:543.

66 C. F. D. Moule, *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960), p. 64; A. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1914), pp. 630-632.

67 Moule, p. 63.

68 Eduard Schweizer, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* "Das Neue Testament Deutsch" (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), p. 321.

69 C. M. Tuckett, "Atonement in the NT," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1:519.

70 The LXX translates in Lev 4:3, 14 *peri hamartias* for the "sin offering" just as Romans 8:3 has *peri hamartias*. Both seem to be related to each other.

71 See Peter Stuhlmacher, *Reconciliation, Law and Righteousness. Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 94-109; Leonhard Goppelt, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1982), pp. 95-97; S. Lyonnet and L. Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice. A Biblical and Patristic Study* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), pp. 155-166.

72 For a lengthy discussion, see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (3rd ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 144-213.

73 H. J. Kraus, *Psalms 1-59* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1988), 393, follows Joachim Begrich, "Das priesterliche Heilsorakel," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 52 (1934), pp. 81-92, and considers this as a priestly oracle of salvation. However, it may be better to think of it as a divine self-revelation.

74 See F. F. Bruce, "'Our God and Saviour': A Recurring Biblical Pattern," *The Saviour God*, ed. S. G. F. Brandon (1963), pp. 54-65.

75 John E. Hartley, "yasha," *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, eds. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer, Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), 1:414.

76 So the NRSV which follows the RSV in rendering this term as "deliverance."

77 Gerhard F. Hasel, *Jonah: Messenger of the Eleventh Hour* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1980), p. 41.

78 W. Michaelis, "hodos," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 5:78-84.

79 Johannes Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles* "Anchor Bible, 31" (Garden City: Doubleday, 1967), p. 34.

80 F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (London: Marshall, Scott & Morgan, 1968), pp. 100, 101.

81 Colin Brown, "Redemption," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 3:213.

82 C. K. Barrett, "Salvation Proclaimed: XII. Acts 4:8-12," *Expository Times* 94 (1982), pp. 68-71.

83 Walter Grundmann, "dei," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 2:24, notes that "dei has also a place in the description of God's saving action towards men."

84 Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles* "New Testament Commentary" (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1990), p. 165.

85 Kistemaker, p. 156.

86 Leon Morris, "Atonement, Theories of," *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. W. A. Elwell (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 100.

87 Williston Walker, *A History of the Christian Church* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1959), p. 241.

88 Robert D. Linder, "Abelard (Abailard), Peter," *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Faith*, ed. J. D. Douglas (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1974), p. 3.

89 Morris, p. 100.

90 Morris, pp. 100, 101.

91 Morris, p. 101.

92 See Leon Morris, *The Atonement: Its Meaning and Significance* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1983), pp. 153-76.

93 Among the extensive literature, see Seth Erlandsson, "The Wrath of YHWH," *Tyndale Bulletin* 23 (1972), pp. 111-116; N. Fuglister, "Gott der Rache," *Experiment Christentum* 8 (1970), pp. 117-133; H. M. Haney, *The Wrath of God in the Former Prophets* (New York: Vantage, 1960); R. Hanson, "Wrath of God," *Expository Times* 58 (1946-47), pp. 216-218; W. H. Simpson, *Divine Wrath in the Eighth Century Prophets* (diss.; Boston University, 1968); R. V. G. Tasker, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Wrath of God* (London, 1951); Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, pp. 147-154, 179-202.

94 Steven H. Travis, "Wrath of God (NT)," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 6:997.

95 See C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Fontana Books, 1962), pp. 47-50.

96 Dodd, *Romans*, p. 50.

97 Ellen G. White, *Counsels on Stewardship*, p. 19: "By pointing them [brethren] to the sacrifice Christ had made in their behalf, he thought to arouse their love."

98 Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, pp. 179-202.

99 Travis, "Wrath of God (NT)," 6:997.

100 Morris, "Atonement, Theories of," p. 101.

101 Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie*, p. 277, (see note 103 below).

102 B. Klappert, "Lord's Supper," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. C. Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1976), 2:530.

103 J. Jeremias, *Neutestamentliche Theologie: 1. Teil: Die Verkündigung Jesu* (2nd ed.; Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1973), p. 278.

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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