

SUBSTITUTION

by
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NECESSITY: DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM OF SIN

There is a great doctrine taught in Holy Scripture which magnifies the grace and mercy of God and answers the deepest need of man. It is the, doctrine of "substitution." That word is found nowhere in the Bible, but the truth which it represents is evident throughout the Scriptures.

The divine act of substitution is set forth clearly in Isaiah 53:4-6 in these words: *"Surely, he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

The element of substitution is seen when we emphasize the pronouns in that text. It is a prophecy of Jesus Christ and His suffering for sinners. HE bore OUR griefs; HE carried OUR sorrows; HE was wounded for OUR transgressions; HE was bruised for OUR iniquities; The Lord hath laid on HIM the iniquity of US all. That is an excellent summary of the Bible doctrine of substitution, but it is only a summary of doctrine. An understanding of substitution will

magnify the grace of God which He manifests in the saving of sinners.

First, a question demands an answer: Why was substitution necessary? The answer must be, Substitution was necessary because of man's problem with sin. The answer to that question necessitates a review of a basic truth of the Bible.

Man is a sinner.

The Bible speaks often of the sin of man. It never raises a question whether man has a sin problem, for that is an undeniable fact according to the divine record. It speaks often of the problem sin brought to man, the consequences of sin in the life of every person, and how that problem can be solved so that man can be accepted in peace before God.

Turn back in your mind to the events recorded in (Genesis, chapters 1-3). God performed the miracle of creation, making a whole universe out of nothing. The final act of His creation was to make man in His own image and likeness. God put the man He had made in a beautiful garden where there grew every plant that produced food for man to eat and foliage and flowers for man to enjoy their beauty. He gave man freedom over all things in that garden, with one exception. God said, "*Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it. for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*" Genesis 2:16, 17. Man lived in absolute peace and plenty in that beautiful garden of God.

Then the devil entered the scene. Through the agency of the serpent, Satan came to the woman (named Eve) whom God had given to be a companion to the man. He raised questions about what God had commanded, "*Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not set of every tree of the garden?*" He denied the very word of God, "*Ye shall not surely...*" He attributed evil motives to God, "*for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.*" He led the woman to rebel against God, ". . . *she took of the fruit thereof, and do eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.*" See Genesis 3:1-6.

The act of disobedience to God brought sin into human experience. There was a separation between the man and the woman; each was ashamed to stand before the other (Genesis 3:7). There was a separation between man and God; he was ashamed to stand before the God whom he had disobeyed. Separation is the essence of death, so the warning of God ("*thou shalt surely die*") come to pass in exact detail.

Sin must be judged.

What will God do? The guilt of man is without denial. The sentence of God is clearly announced. To be just, God must let judgment fall upon sin. That would mean that judgment will fall upon the man and the woman who had committed sin.

Humanly speaking, there were three possibilities open to God. (1) He could pass over man's sin and, accept him in spite of his guilt. But if God did that, He would be denying His own law that the soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:4). The Bible statement that "*The wages of sin is death*" would be proved untrue under those circumstances (Romans 6:23). That would never do.

(2) He could condemn men in their sin and let the judgment of justice fall on them without mercy. But God is loving and merciful, full of compassion and kindness, as well as being just. He has "*no pleasure in the death of the wicked*" Ezekiel 33:11, but desires that the wicked one turn from his wickedness and live.

(3) He could work out some way by which He can judge sin with justice and yet forgive the

sinner who turns in repentance from his sinful way. That sounds like an impossible thing to do, but that was the Course God decided to take.

Do not interpret the mercy of God to be weakness in dealing with sin. Never! *"God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth."* Nahum 1:2, 3. *"The Judge of all the earth will do right"* Genesis 18:25.

God judged the innocent for the guilty.

Here is the solution of the problem at which God arrived. He would permit an innocent party to suffer the just judgment which should fall upon the guilty party. That is first indicated in (Genesis 3:21). Adam and Eve had attempted to clothe themselves with fig leaves. Such clothing was insufficient. God took the skins of animals and made coats of skins, and clothed them. That was the innocent animal suffering the loss of its life and its skin to provide clothing for the guilty humans. The principle of substitution was established by God himself.

Leviticus 17:11 records God's law concerning substitutionary suffering for sin. It reads, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."* That's it! That is the principle upon which all sacrifices for sin are based. God decreed the innocent could suffer in the place of the guilty, and the guilty could be forgiven his sin.

The law of divine justice said death must come as a consequence of sin. The death of an innocent party can be substituted for the death of the guilty party, so long as the justice of God's law is satisfied. That was the basis upon which all the sacrifices of the Old Testament religion was offered. That was the basis upon which Jesus Christ went to the cross and suffered death for guilty sinners. That is the basis upon which we claim the atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ and receive forgiveness of sin today,

When Jesus Christ went to the cross and died for sinners, He died for you. Think of it! Even before you were born, Jesus loved you so much that He suffered death in your place. Now, He offers full pardon and eternal forgiveness of all sin. You are highly privileged to have the opportunity to enter into the good of His atoning deed. The way is simple: repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ.

"Father, we are amazed at such mercy and grace you have shown to us. We can scarce imagine that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Thank you for the blessed doctrine of substitution wherein the guilty can go free because an Innocent one suffered for them. Thank you for forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ. In His name, Amen. "

MEANING: CHRIST IN OUR PLACE FOR OUR BENEFIT

"When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly... God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" Romans 5:6,8. *"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many"* Matthew 20:28.

Those verses are but typical of many passages in the New Testament which teach the blessed doctrine of substitution in declaring that Jesus Christ has died for the benefit and in the place of sinners. The principle of the innocent one taking the place and bearing the judgment which was to have fallen upon the guilty one is the heart of New Testament teaching. When applied to Jesus Christ's dying in behalf of guilty sinners, it is the New Testament doctrine of substitution. But there is an insight into the motive and the act of Jesus' atoning sacrifice for men which is not

readily evident in the English language. We use the same term, a preposition "for," to translate two different terms in the Greek language in which our New Testament was first written. The one Greek term (*hyper*) means "for" in the sense of "on one's behalf; for one's benefit." We might say a mother prepared dinner "for" her family. That would mean she cooked the meal for their benefit, on their behalf. She did it for the good they would receive from it.

There is a second word in Greek which we translate "for" in English. It means "in the place of" another. A mother might say to her child, "Please take out the garbage for me." That means that the child would do what the mother would have to do otherwise. It means the child would take the mother's place in doing the chore.

Do you see the distinction between those two words? One means something is done for the benefit of a person; the other means something is done so that the other person will not have to do it himself.

Both those words are used in the New Testament when reference is made to Jesus' suffering and dying for sinners. He died for the benefit of sinners, and He died in the place of sinners. What a marvel of grace! Let us examine some of the texts of Scripture which teach that two-fold expression of the grace of God.

Jesus died for the benefit, on the behalf of sinners.

That is to say, He did not die for sinners because of the benefit it would bring to Him, but because of the benefit it would bring to them. Of course, God is glorified in the salvation of sinners. But that was not the ultimate reason Jesus died for them. Jesus died for sinners because of the benefit it would bring to them.

Jesus' own words indicate that His motive in dying for sinners was to bring spiritual benefit to them. Look into the upper room as He observed the Passover with His disciples. *"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you"* Luke 22:19, 20. He was telling the disciples that His body was to be crucified for their benefit and his blood was to be shed in their behalf. It would profit them, not Him, for Him to suffer and die for them by His death on the cross. Jesus announced, *"I lay down my life for (on behalf of, for the benefit of) the sheep"* John 10: 15. We could want no more proof than that, for we have His own words. Jesus' motive in dying for sinners was that they might be benefited. He suffered for their good. Amazing grace! The apostles of the Lord bore witness by divine inspiration that Jesus suffered for the benefit of sinners. Paul bore witness to man's weakness and wrongness when he wrote that men were *"without strength"* and *"ungodly."* But He testified that the problem with man was solved when *"Christ died for the ungodly, even "died for us "* Romans 5:6, 8. Think of it. Christ died on behalf of and for the benefit of the ungodly, even people like you and me who had sinned and were in need of forgiveness. (Galatians 3:13) affirms that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse *"for us"* (in our behalf). He gave himself in our behalf that He might *"redeem us from all iniquity"* Titus 2:14.

The Apostle Peter added his testimony, saying, *"Christ suffered for us"* (on our behalf, for our benefit) by bearing our sin as the Just One suffering for (on the behalf of) the unjust ones (I Peter 2:21; 3:18). All the gospel writers agree in that fact.

I can think of no more wonderful act of grace than for one to suffer in the behalf of, for the benefit of, another. That grace is magnified when it is the Sinless suffering judgment as if He were personally guilty of the sin of the sinner.

Jesus died in our place

The Bible doctrine of substitution is further clarified by the use of the second Greek word translated "for" (anti) in our English language. It is the word of direct substitution. It means to take the place of another, to suffer instead of the other one suffering.

Consider Matthew 20:28, "*Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.*" Why did He give His life? The Son of man, Jesus Christ, gave His life in the place of the many who would otherwise have to give their lives. Consider the usage of that word in Luke 11: 11. Jesus said, "*If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for (instead of, in the place of) a fish give him a serpent?*" That is, would a loving father substitute a serpent in the place of a fish? Of course not.

But that same idea of substitution is what the Bible says happened when the Lord Jesus went to the cross "for" (indeed of, in the piece of) sinners. It is evident that the justice of divine law decreed the death of every person guilty of personal sin. That included the whole human race, "*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.*" Romans 3:23. Every person was living under the judgment of death, the sentence to be executed with eternal consequences. But before that sentence was executed in eternal judgment, Jesus Christ came and took the place of sinners. The judgment that was due to fall upon them fell upon Him. He suffered as the direct substitute for them, and His sufferings on their behalf worked for them an eternal benefit. God is just; yet God justifies the ungodly (Romans 3:26). That sounds Impossible, doesn't it? But it is true: God is just and the justifier of ungodly sinners. It is possible because He justifies those sinners who "*believe in Jesus*" Romans 3:19-31.

Jesus Christ has suffered in the place of and for the benefit of sinners. He has borne the just judgment which would have fallen on them. Those who receive Him by repentance and faith become as justified before God as Jesus is. That is the meaning and blessing which comes upon entering in to the good of substitution.

"Father, we marvel at the grace which brought your only begotten Son into the world to be the Savior for sinners. We wonder at the grace which made Him suffer as if He were personally guilty of our sins. We can scarce comprehend how it is that we can be forgiven all sin and accepted in peace before you through Jesus Christ. But because you have said that is the way it is, we accept it and rejoice in the privileges of it. And we praise You. In Jesus' name. Amen"

METHOD: CHRIST ONE WITH MAN

Hebrews 2:9-18 reads in this manner, "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings, For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not*

on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. "

I read that entire passage because of the contribution it makes to an understanding of the Bible doctrine of substitution, which is our subject of study. It explains the first step in God's act of substitution by which Jesus Christ came in behalf of sinners, died in the place of sinners, and brought great benefit to sinners. The first step in that divine act of substitution is the coming of the Son of God in human flesh as one in nature and experience with mankind.

He came *"that he by the grace of God should taste death for (on the behalf of and for the benefit of) every man."* He did not take upon Himself the nature of angels, for it was men, not angels, which needed to be redeemed. He was *"made like"* man in eternal appearance and experience of the limitations of human nature. Let us examine His becoming one with mankind that He might become Savior of those who believe.

He was born by a physical birth

(Luke 1, 26-38), reports the circumstances of the conception of a virgin woman who was to bear the Christ child. Her conception occurred by a supernatural act by which God created a fertilized egg in her womb. It developed into a human fetus and in due time a little son was born to Mary of Nazareth.

The only miracle relating to the incarnation of God in human flesh, by birth to Mary, was the conception. The development of the fetus, the nine month period of gestation, and the circumstances of physical birth were like that of every other human who has ever been born. His birth process was natural in every way.

It is surprising to realize that when God came into human history, incarnate in human flesh, He came by the way of physical birth. Jesus came that way in order to be identified as a man among men, that substitution could be possible.

He experienced physical development.

Consider this surprising report recorded in Luke 2:52: *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and Man."* Note the four areas of His development: wisdom, stature, favour with God, favour with man. Those are four areas of all normal human development. 1. There is mental development: *"wisdom"*. 2. There is physical development: *"stature"*. 3. There is spiritual development: *"favour with God"*. 4. There is social development: *"favour with Man"*. That Jesus *"increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and Man"* indicates that He experience the normal human development.

Such development was possible for the only begotten Son of God because He emptied Himself (through retaining His divine nature) when He came into the world. He experienced all that a normal human experiences and birth and growth to human maturity.

He had a physical nature.

He took the flesh and blood nature which we bear. He was *"made like"* us Hebrews 2:14-17. His purpose was to be like us (except that He had no sin) so He could make reconciliation for us. He came in the *"fashion"* and *"likeness"* of men that He might become the Savior of men.

Not one word of this teaching is meant to question or deny the full deity of Jesus Christ. He was very God of very God, even while here in human flesh. In Him the whole totality of deity settled

down and resided at home in his human body (Colossians 2:9). But He was God-Man, with the full nature of deity and the full nature of humanity at the same time.

He had a physical lineage.

(Matthew 1:1-6) traces the ancestry of Jesus back through Joseph (his foster father). It shows that Jesus descended from David and continues the genealogy all the way back to Abraham. The purpose of that genealogy was to show Jesus had the right to sit on the throne of David. (Luke 3:23-38) traces the ancestry of Jesus back through Mary (his earthly mother). It shows Jesus descended from David and Abraham, but the record is continued generation after generation all the way back to Adam. Its purpose was to show Jesus as a Man among men, one with man, that He might be qualified to be the Savior of those who believe.

Again, the physical lineage of Jesus does not deny His full deity. He was God (John 1:1, 2) before He became man (John 1:14), while He was here in human flesh (John 14:9), and after His ascension back to heaven (Hebrews 1:1-14) In Jesus of Nazareth, God become flesh and lived among men.

What, is the significance of that teaching? The full humanity of Jesus is as important to the doctrine of salvation by grace as is the full deity of Jesus. If He were man and not God, He could not be our Savior. If He were God and not man, He would not be qualified to be our Savior. He must be both God and man In order to bring both together by His substitutionary sufferings in behalf of sinners.

So Jesus came as a Man among man in order to make us children of God. His experiences here in human flesh are referred to as encouragement for Christians to trust Him the more (Hebrews 2:18; 4:14-16 He "*became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him*". After He became "*perfect*" (qualified) by His sufferings here in human flesh.

I say, then, that the incarnation of Jesus Christ in human flesh was the very first stop God took in the great deed of substitution by which Jesus died in the place of and for the benefit of sinners. It was the first step in substitution by which all the blessings of God are secured to the repenting and trusting sinner.

Do not doubt nor argue the issue. The Bible states it as fact. Believe it as fact. More important, trust Him as your own personal Savior, and you will enter into the good of the blessing He come to bestow by the divine act of substitution, dying in behalf of and in the place of sinners.

"Father, grant that the multitudes who share these words will include many for whom the truth presented will be life-changing. Grant that many may come to personal and saving knowledge of God in Jesus Christ. And may they enter into the blessing of salvation right now. For Jesus' sake, Amen."

METHOD: CHRIST DISTINCT FROM MAN

Hebrews, chapter 7, is an extended discussion of the Bible doctrine of priesthood. It begins with a review of the basic guidelines determining who could be a priest in ancient Israel. It continues with a discussion of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. I read selected verses from Hebrews, chapter 7.

"For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident. for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after

the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood . Therefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priest; to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself, For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity, but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore" Hebrews 7:14-28.

That extended reading is important to our study of substitution for these reasons: (1) It underscores our previous investigation of the Bible teaching that Jesus was with us as a Man among men that He actually took our human nature; (2)It stresses the other side of that truth that though Jesus was a Man among us, He was distinct and separate from us. He was Man, but He was more than man. He was Man with a capital "M," an unusual and unique Man. He was different because He is the God-Man, the nature of God in the body of man.

Even in His human body on earth, Jesus is "*...is the image of the invisible God. The firstborn of every creature...for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell*" Colossians 1:15,19. "*For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily:* Colossians 2:9. Yes, Jesus is the brightness of God's glory and the express image of God's person; when He had purged our sins by His own deed, He set down at at right hand of the Majesty on high (Hebrews 1:3,4).

The text we read from Hebrews, chapter 7, indicates several areas in which Jesus Christ is distinct and separate from other men. (1) He lives an unending life, verses 23, 24. (2) He commits no sin, verse 26. (3) He needs no sacrifice offered in His own behalf, verse 27. (4) He is consecrated as a priest by the oath of God and not by natural descent among men, verse 28. Yes, Jesus is unique. Though having lived among men, He is distinct from men.

Jesus attested by witnesses.

God the Father spoke in a voice from heaven and said of Jesus, "*This is my beloved Son, in whom / am well pleased*" Matthew 3:17. He never said that of an angel (Hebrews 1:13). Jesus could say in truth, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*" John 14:9. "*I and my Father are one*" John 10:30.

Even those who were not committed to Jesus Christ in religious faith became convinced that He was a unique Man among men. The Roman army officer who was in charge of the detail of soldiers who performed the act of crucifixion when Jesus died gave this testimony, "*Truly this was the Son of God*" Matthew 27:54.

Take the matter of separation from sin. Hebrews 7:26, 27 reads, "*For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily ... to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's* That is to say, "We needed the kind of high priest who was one of us, yet so much above us that He had no sin for which atonement needed to be made and that He could make atonement for our sins. Jesus is that kind of person and is our Great High Priest."

He dared to challenge His opponents to find one area where there was sin in His life (John 8:26). It was not a boastful and baseless challenge. Those who knew Him best, the disciples who lived with Him for three years, testified that He was one "*Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*" IPeter 2:27.

Jesus assailed by temptation.

It is not that He had no temptation to sin. Quite the contrary. He suffered being tempted Hebrews 2:18. *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* Hebrews 4:15. That can be said of no other person in all of human history. *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no not one ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* Romans 3:10-12, 23. He was distinct from the rest of humanity in that though He suffered the same temptation as we all, He did not sin when tempted.

Jesus assumed man's sin.

The principle of substitution, as set forth in Holy Scripture, demanded that Jesus be sinless in order to be our Savior. A sinful person could not offer an effective atonement for another sinful person. The innocent must bear the guilt and the punishment of the guilty in order for forgiveness to be realized. There is no other way in the principle of divine justice. Jesus could not be our Savior if He had committed even one little sin during His life here on earth. He had to suffer, the Just One for the unjust ones, in order to bring us to God (I Peter 3:18).

And that is exactly what Jesus did! He was *"made sin"* when He hung on that cross near Jerusalem. He was *"made"* what He was not. He bore a guilt which was not His own. He suffered a death which was due to fall upon those persons whose guilt He bore. He could be our Savior because He was bearing our sins, paying the just penalty for our sins, and having no sins of His own for which to pay.

That is why I say the Bible doctrine of substitution demands that the one who bears our sin-guilt must be one who is like us, and yet distinct from us. He must have the human nature without the human guilt which comes from personal sin.

From that reasoning, you can see that Jesus alone can be the Savior of sinners. That is why the Bible reads, *"Neither is there salvation in any other. for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* Acts 4:12. Though we are weak (*"without strength"*), wrong (*"ungodly"*) and wicked (*"enemies"*), the remedy is the same: *"Christ died for the ungodly ... Christ died for us ... we werereconciled to God by the death of his Son"* Romans 5:6, 8, 10. Salvation is by Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

Will you accept the provision which God has made? Will you come to God in humble faith, claiming the merits of the only begotten Son of God? Will you accept forgiveness of sins and life eternal which is secured and offered to you by the death of Jesus Christ? If you will accept it all by faith, salvation is yours.

"Father, our hearts are encouraged to know that Jesus Christ, your only begotten Son, has come as one of us. And we are encouraged the more to realize He is more than one of us, that He is above us. Thank you for the provision of **salvation** by repentance and faith in Him alone. Thank you for each one who accepts that offer of salvation right now. In Jesus' name. Amen."

METHOD: CHRIST IN PLACE OF MEN

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour, doth he by Me grace of God should taste doeth for every man ..."

that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, dot is, the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" Hebrews 2:9, 14, 15.

With such words the Bible summarizes the great work of grace in which Jesus the Christ, who had come as Man among men, yet distinct from men, took the place of men in death that they might have the inheritance of eternal life. It is that great deed of substitution in which He took our place and suffered in our behalf which secures forgiveness of sin and salvation to those who repent and believe.

The Bible teaches an "objective atonement." That is to say, our salvation from sin is based upon the specific act of Jesus in which He died on the cross and arose from death. It is not based upon His good example, nor His great teaching, but upon His death in our behalf.

1. Illustrated with Adam and Eve.

Look at the truth of substitution illustrated in Genesis 3. Adam and Eve had committed the great sin of open rebellion against the known will of God. It was so serious a sin that it separated them from each other and each of them from God. They had tried to fashion fig leaf clothing to hide their bodies from each other; they had hidden among the trees of the garden to hide from God. Divine justice required that they be put outside the beautiful Garden of Eden. It was at that point that we see a great act of substitution performed by God.

God took the skins of animals and made clothing for the man and the woman. That was a picture of what He would do to clothe us with righteousness through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son.

Innocent animals had to die in order for the guilty humans to have clothing of skins. A two-fold benefit came from the sacrifice of the animals. There were the skins to cover their nakedness. There was the blood to cover their sin. That is indicative of the act of God by which He supplies all our need by the suffering of Jesus Christ on our behalf and in our place.

It was God's ordained purpose that Jesus Christ should suffer death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). *'And he is the propitiation for our sins. and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world-* (I John 2:2). He is *"The Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world-* (John 1:29). *He who knew no sin was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him* (II Corinthians 5:21).

II Illustrated with Barabbas.

Turn your mind to Calvary. Upon that hill, three crosses stand ready to receive the three condemned victims unto their death. On either of the two outer crosses, there is a criminal who has committed such serious crimes as to deserve to die. That center cross will receive the body of Jesus, a man who committed no crime nor sin at all. Yet, He will hang upon it as if He were personally guilty of the most heinous of crimes.

But that center cross was not prepared for Jesus. Those who planned the crucifixion did not know it would be Jesus who would hang there. The cross was prepared originally for a criminal named Barabbas who was a robber (John 18:40) and guilty of sedition and murder (Luke 23:25). The cross was prepared for him, not for Jesus.

Pilate sought to release Jesus, knowing there was no cause for Him to be condemned. He offered to release Jesus or Barabbas, sure in his own mind that no one would want Barabbas released. To his surprise, the people asked for the release of the hardened criminal and the crucifixion of Jesus. Therefore, Jesus went to the cross which was prepared for Barabbas. If the criminal

Barabbas had walked past the place of the skull that day, he might have looked to that center cross and said, "That was where I was condemned to suffer death. The Man hanging there is in the place I deserve to be. He is taking my place."

That is an illustration of the far greater act of substitution which God performed in the person of Jesus, His only begotten Son. Jesus not only took the place in death which we deserved to fill, but also He bore the blame and guilt of sin which we committed by the free act of our wills. That is the miracle of grace in the Bible doctrine of substitution.

God has perfected the way of salvation for sinners. Jesus Christ took our guilt and suffered the penalty in our place. The atonement is made. The sacrifice is completed. All is ready for the taking. Nothing can be added nor needs to be added to what Jesus has done for us.

What will be God's attitude to one who tries to come to Him by some way different than through Jesus Christ? God will not accept him. To reject God's way of salvation through the substitutionary atonement of His only begotten Son is to give the grossest insult to God. *"Neither is there salvation in any other. for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12).

"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater. for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. he that not believeth God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is In his Son. He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (IJohn 5:9-12).

What is the real question facing your heart today? It is not a question of whether you are guilty or innocent of sin. The Bible settled that once for all in saying, *"...For have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Outside of Jesus Christ, you are as lost in sin and under personal guilt as any other person who has ever lived. Accept that fact. Do not argue about it. That is not the real question with which you must deal.

The question of greatest importance is this: "Have you accepted the benefits secured through the substitutionary suffering of Jesus Christ on your behalf and in your place?" If the answer is "Yes," you are saved. If the answer is "No," you are lost.

It is not too late to enter into the good of it, however. The Bible says, *"...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"* (II Corinthians 6:2). The atonement secured so long ago is still available and applicable to each one who repents of sin and trusts Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Do it now!

"Father, we thank you for the grace you have shown toward us who are guilty sinners in that even while we were In the act of sinning Christ died for us. How hopeless we would be apart from the blessed act of substitutionary suffering. We do not know how He could bear our sin before we were ever born, but we thank you that He did. Fill with joy the hearts of those who are trusting Jesus now, and grant that many others may come to share like precious faith. For Jesus' sake. A men,"