

Introduction

Review of previous two weeks:

In week two we studied God's attributes and then on week three we looked at Biblical anthropology and concluded that man is totally depraved.

"Don't all religions teach the same basic things?" NO! Consider the following foundational differences:

There is a fundamental difference between monotheism's and pantheism's view of humanity's main dilemma: **true moral guilt (i.e. objective guilt before God because of our violations against his character vs. subjective guilt feelings toward others) before a righteous God** (DIAGRAM WALL BETWEEN US and GOD) vs. ignorance of our union with God that already exists (EASTERN RELIGIONS). See Ps. 14:3; Is. 59:2; Jas. 2:10; Matt. 5:20-48 for passages that speak of true moral guilt.

There is also a fundamental difference between the way Christianity resolves this dilemma and the way other monotheistic religions resolve it: SALVATION THROUGH HUMAN MERIT vs. SALVATION THROUGH *SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT*.

Substitutionary Atonement: God in his love provides a blameless substitute to bear his righteous judgment of our sins.

This concept is a "given" in the biblical revelation. We can demonstrate its logical coherence (i.e., the only way a righteous God could accept sinful people without compromising his character is by punishing someone in our place), and we can provide analogies of it from human life (CIVIL WAR DRAFT; IRS DEBT)—but we cannot prove its necessity.

God was not *obligated* in any way (by anything in us or outside himself) to provide atonement for us; it is a free, unmerited gift extended by him. The motivation for the atonement comes from within God himself—his righteousness and justice demand the payment of death for our sins, and because of his love and mercy he provides that payment for us himself. According to the Bible, the only way God can do this is through the death of his own Son (Gal. 2:21).

Progressive Revelation of Substitutionary Atonement

The term "progressive revelation" refers to how God reveals himself and his plan *gradually* over time. Substitutionary atonement is not a New Testament innovation, contrary to this charge by many Jews and Muslims. God instituted it and taught it from the earliest times after the Fall. That's why Paul says it was "witnessed by the law and the prophets." (Rom 3:21) On Week #1, we traced the lineage of the "seed." Most of those passages referred to Christ's kingly rule (2nd coming). Now let's look at how the Old Testament develops the idea of substitutionary atonement.

Pre-Cross:

(Gen. 3:21) And the LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

Adam and Eve were ashamed of their nakedness after they sinned (3:7,8). This was a subjective experience of their objective moral guilt before God. God rejected their unsuccessful attempt to cover their shame with fig-leaves. And out of love, God provided clothing for them—clothing made from animal skins. Was God teaching Adam and Eve that a death had to occur for their shame to be covered?

(Francis Schaeffer) "Immediately after their rebellion, (Adam and Eve) were now afraid and tried to cover themselves. But in verse 21, God took this covering away and gave them a coat of skins . . . Probably, these were the first animals to die. This indicates, I believe, that man could not stand before God in his own covering. Rather, he needed a covering from God . . . that required sacrifice and death—a covering provided not by man but by God. One would want to be careful not to press this into dogma . . . but (I believe) that this was the beginning of the Old Testament sacrificial system . . . (Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis In Space and Time*, p. 105,106)

(Keil and Delitzsch) "By selecting the skins of beasts for the clothing of the first (people), and therefore causing the death or slaughter of beasts for that purpose, he showed them how they might use the sovereignty they possessed over the animals for their own good, and even sacrifice animal life for the preservation of humans; so that *this act of God laid the foundation for the sacrifices* . . . Clothed in this sign of mercy, the man was driven out of Paradise, to bear the punishment of his sin . . . " (Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, p. 106)

- **Summary: Death to cover shame and guilt? Provided by God?**

(Gen. 4:3-5) So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. And Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. (4) And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. (5) So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

God has apparently already instructed Adam and his children that they must approach him through sacrifice. Heb. 11:4 tells us that God accepted Abel's sacrifice because he offered with the right attitude (faith). These two attitudes were possibly expressed by the gifts they brought (Abel's "firstlings and fat portions" versus Cain's "an offering"). Was Abel's sacrifice acceptable *also* because it was animal (inferred from later revelation)?

- **Summary: Humans are instructed to approach God through sacrifice.**

(Gen. 8:20,21) Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar. And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; (21) and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.

Noah had obviously been instructed about animal sacrifice—including which animals were "clean" (i.e., of God's choosing). Gen. 7:2,3 says God had them take "sevens" of clean animals. This sacrifice is connected (in context) with the idea of avoiding God's judgment. It is an acceptable sacrifice, because God responds with a promise never to destroy the earth by flood again. Because of human depravity (8:21), we are dependent upon God's mercy and forbearance. The sacrifice is probably thus a picture of *how* God extends that mercy.

IF TIME, ANTHROPOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FOR "ORIGINAL RELIGION" (MONOTHEISM and SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE) MATERIAL GOES HERE. See Robert Brow in *Eerdman's Handbook to the World Religions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982), pp. 30-48. Don Richardson's *Eternity in Their Hearts* also provides some examples of this.

Summary: God extends mercy to evil human beings through sacrifice.

Aside on contrast between Pagan and Christian sacrifice

Pagan	Judeo-Christian
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The gods wrath is arbitrary, capricious, and temperamental.	God's wrath is clear, rational, and dependable.
Worshipper innovates ways to appease the gods.	God ordains and prescribes the way to appease him.
Sacrifice is an animal, vegetable, or mineral.	Sacrifice is ultimately God himself in human form.
Sacrifice is often viewed as meeting a physical need (hunger, sensuality).	Sacrifice satisfies God's righteous anger for our sins.

Gen. 22:1-14 - What do we learn about substitutionary atonement from this passage?

Abraham and Isaac had knowledge about animal sacrifice, including the acceptable animal (vs 7,8).

God orchestrated this event, in part, as a prophetic type of the way he would provide a sacrifice for our sins.

- Vs 14 is a prediction that God would one day provide his sacrifice on Mt. Moriah. Mt. Moriah is the site of Jerusalem, the Temple (2 Chron. 3:1), and Jesus' death.
- God, like Abraham, offered up "his son, his only son, whom he loved" (Jn. 3:16 probably purposefully echoes this wording).
- Jesus, like Isaac, carried the instrument of his own death to the site (Jn. 19:17).
- Isaac was old enough to carry wood for the sacrifice up the mountain. We can infer from this that he was probably in his teen years or older. It's unlikely that Abraham in his old age could have forced Isaac down on the altar. Isaac likely offered himself *voluntarily* in faith, just like Jesus did.
- Isaac's deliverance from death was a prophetic type of Jesus' resurrection (see Heb. 11:19).
- Isaac was the progenitor of the promised "seed" (Gen. 12:3). Through this event, God explains further *how* the "Seed" would make God's blessing available to all the nations—by dying a substitutionary death.

Note: Although Abraham evidently did not yet know this, God later made it very clear that he detested child sacrifice as a form of religious worship (Lev. 18:21; Jer. 32:35). Furthermore, it is not intrinsically morally objectionable for God to require the life of human beings. He does this ultimately at judgment, and he required the life of his own Son.

Was Jesus referring to this incident in Jn. 8:56,57? "My day" may well refer to Jesus' crucifixion ("my hour;" "my time"). Jesus may be saying that Abraham saw in this event a picture of Jesus' most important act.

- Jesus may have actually been "the angel of the Lord" who directed him not to kill Isaac but offer up the ram instead. Vs 12 indicates that the angel of the Lord, while he speaks of God in the third person, is also the One to whom the sacrifice is offered. (See also Judges 13:18,22).
- **Summary: The original audience could see that God provided a substitute and possibly that this place would be the place of future atonement.**

In view of subsequent revelation, the location (Moriah) and the identity (only Son) of God's atonement, and his resurrection are clear.

Ex. 12:1-14 - The good news is that God is going to judge Egypt so that Pharaoh lets God's people go. The bad news is that the Israelites will be judged also—unless they observe this ritual. If they do observe it, his judgment will "pass over" those houses. Note these key elements in the ritual meal:

- The sacrifice must be *without physical defect* (vs 5).
- It must be *killed* (vs 6).
- Its *blood* (proof of its death) is what causes God's judgment to "pass over" (vs 7,22,23).
- Displaying the blood, eating in haste (unleavened bread), and being dressed in readiness demonstrated their faith that God would deliver them through his appointed means. God's provision must be appropriated through faith.
- God commanded that they celebrate Passover yearly as a memorial (Ex. 12:14,26,27).
- God commanded that they celebrate Passover *in the land* (vs 25). Deut. 16:5,6; 2 Chron. 6:6). This has prophetic significance, as we shall see (Deut. 16:5,6; 2 Chron. 6:6 - eventually God specified that Passover be celebrated in Jerusalem).
- **Summary: Substitute must be without defect and be personally appropriated through faith to be effective; location of sacrifice (Jerusalem).**

Lev. 4 - The tabernacle was a mobile tent that God ordered the nation of Israel to put up every time they pitched camp. It illustrated his desire to dwell among his people, the problem that prevented him from fully doing this—and the solution he would one day provide for this problem. The problem is human sinfulness, illustrated by the physical barriers (veils before the holy place and the holy of holies) and the necessity of priests. The solution is substitutionary atonement offered through God's chosen mediator-priest. Note the common elements:

- They must slay an animal of God's choosing that is without defect >> *blameless substitute* (vs 3,23,28,32).
- The offerer must lay his hands on the animal's head, symbolically *identifying* the sacrifice with his sins (vs 4,15,24,29,33).
- The priest must offer the animal for them >> *mediator* (vs 5,16,25,30,34). Because this was only a picture, the (sinful) priests had to offer a sacrifice for their own sins before they could act as a mediator for others.
- They had to go through these grisly ritual sacrifices virtually every day. This not only kept them focused on the problem of sin and God's remedy (substitutionary atonement); it also indicated that these sacrifices were ultimately insufficient (Heb. 10:1-4), in that the people had no direct access to God, and they had no assurance of complete forgiveness.

Note: "Unintentional sins" (vs 2,22,27; Num. 15:27-29) evidently refer to sins that do not involve an intentional rejection of God and/or his provision for forgiveness.

"Presumptuous sins" (Num. 15:30,31; Deut. 17:12,13) evidently refer to defiant sins that reject God and his means of provision. This is what the author of Hebrews is referring to in Heb. 10:26-31.

God forgives sin, but won't forgive a sinner who won't repent. The unrepentant is the *presumptuous* sinner.

Note: Leaders were required to offer male goats (Lev. 4:22,23), while common people were required to offer female goats (Lev. 4:27,28). Since male goats were more valuable because of their greater capacity

to produce offspring, those in positions of greater responsibility evidently had to make more costly sacrifices.

- **Summary: Sin is the main issue (sacrifices needed daily - see Heb. 7:27;10:11)! Identification of substitute with person's sin; offering through a mediator.**

Lev. 16 - Day of Atonement symbolism**

Vs 1,2: Aaron's two sons were killed because they offered "strange fire" (Lev. 10:1-3). We may come into God's presence *only* in the way which he prescribes—or else his holiness will consume us. (This is an example of "presumptuous sin.")

The *high priest* is the only one who can enter the Holy of Holies (vs 4). He must dress and bathe in a way which symbolizes purity (vs 4). He symbolizes God's chosen mediator. The high priest must offer a sacrifice for his own sins (vs 11)—one of the inferiorities of this symbolic system (Heb. 7:26-28).

The *two goats* (vs 5) are both sin-offerings representing the nation of Israel. The fact that they are chosen by lots for their roles (vs 8) teaches that the sacrifice is chosen by God rather than by humans. The fact that they are offered to the Lord at the doorway of the tent of meeting may emphasize that God is communicating substitutionary atonement to all the people. It may also symbolize Christ's public death.

The "ark of the covenant" means the "box of the evidence"—God's legal indictment of their sins (MANNA: rejection of God's provision [Ex. 16:32-34]; ROD: rejection of God's leadership [Num. 17:10]; TABLETS: rebellion and stubbornness [Deut. 31:26,27]). The cherubim are angels (often associated with God's righteousness), so their downward look illustrates God's focus on their sins.

The high priest slays one of the goats and offers its blood on the mercy seat ("mercy" means "to cover" or "to atone") to atone for the nation's sins that year (vs 16,17). (OVERHEAD ON ELEMENTS ON/INSIDE ARK OF THE COVENANT >> Ex. 25:10-22) This symbolizes the death of a blameless substitute for the guilt of our sins.

The high priest then lays his hands on the other goat and confesses Israel's sins as he does so—symbolizing identification. Then he chases the animal off to the wilderness. This symbolizes that fact that the guilt of their sins has been sent off because of the atoning death of the substitute (vs 20-22). "Forgiveness" (Greek: *aphiemi*) means "a sending off/away" of our true moral guilt.

Again, the fact that this sacrifice had to be reenacted year after year indicated the insufficiency of the system (Heb. 10:1-4).

Note to teachers: We are assuming that when the ark was in the tabernacle, it contained manna, Aaron's rod, and the Law (see Ex. 16:33-34; Num. 17:1-11; Ex. 25:16;31:16; Heb. 9:4). But when the ark was moved to Solomon's temple, the ark apparently only contained the tablets of the law (1 Kings 8:9).

- **Summary: Greater development of separation caused by sin and removal of guilt through the substitute's death. In addition, we find that the intercessor must be clean and his return from the offering signified God's acceptance of the sacrifice.**

Isa. 52:13-53:12** - This passage clearly teaches that God never viewed the animal sacrifices as efficacious in themselves. They were always a prophetic picture of God's chosen Servant—a blameless Jewish Person whose voluntary death would pay for humanity's sins. Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is the culmination of four passages that progressively reveal more information about the suffering servant (42:1-9, 49:1-13, 50:4-11). Note the sacrificial system/substitutionary atonement language:

53:5 "pierced through for our transgressions . . . crushed for our iniquities . . . by his scourging we are healed . . . "

53:6 " . . . the Lord caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him . . . "

53:8 " . . . he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people, to whom the stroke was due . . . "

53:10 " . . . if he would render himself as a guilt offering . . . "

53:11 " . . . as he will bear their iniquities . . . "

53:12 " . . . he himself bore the sin of many . . . "

Note: 52:14,15 clearly say that his death will also be the basis of forgiveness for Gentiles (" . . . he will sprinkle many nations . . . ").

Some commentators translate the Hebrew word "nazah", here translated "sprinkle", as to "startle". But this form of the word is used only one other place in the OT - Lev 16:14 - where the high priest sprinkles blood on mercy seat to atone for sin. Moreover, yazah in Isaiah 52:15 is in the "Hiphil imperfect" form (future causative) of nazah, which is always translated "to sprinkle." - See Koelher and Baumgardner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the OT v. 2* (Brill, 1995), 683.

Note: What about the Servant described in the past tense? This is a stylistic device ("prophetic past tense"), in which God often describes future events in the past tense to emphasize his sovereignty over human history. Furthermore, the context indicates that this Servant's death is a future event (52:13-15; 53:11 "will").

Note: What about the view that the Servant is the nation of Israel? 53:8 says the Servant is killed "for the transgression of my people." He is also righteous, unlike Israel. He is described as an individual, not as a nation.

53:10 "...He will see His offspring. He will prolong His days."

Resurrection is predicted.

- **Summary: God will send a blameless Jewish Person to atone for humanity's sins, and he will die and be resurrected.**

(John 1:29) The next day he saw Jesus coming to him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

John declares that Jesus is the fulfillment of the sacrificial system who "bears" the whole world's guilt.

(John 1:14) The word became flesh and dwelt (tabernacled) among us. Jesus is the true tabernacle and his sacrifice is the true sacrifice.

Note: John evidently did not understand that there would be two comings of the Messiah, the first one of which would end in his death. John expected Jesus to be a king, as his question in Matt. 11:3 makes clear. Like the other Old Testament prophets, John did not understand how these messianic prophecies fit together (1 Pet. 1:10-12).

- **Summary: The Person (see above) is Christ.**

(Mark 10:45) For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.

(Luke 22:37) "For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, `AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has its fulfillment."

Jesus clearly understood that his substitutionary death was his main mission in the first coming. In the first advent, he comes to serve (as fulfillment of Anonymous Servant) to give his life as a ransom for the many. In the second advent, he comes as a king to be served. Some believe that Jesus was caught by surprise as a confused victim of some horrible circumstances. (See also Luke 22:37)

Jesus did not go to the cross merely to be the perfect expression or example of sacrificial love. The cross *does* communicate this (1 Jn. 4:10; Phil. 2:3-8), but its primary purpose was to actually pay for true moral guilt. Paul insists that unless Jesus' death was atoning, it was needless (Gal. 2:21).

- **Summary: Jesus' substitutionary death was his main mission.**

Matthew 26:26-30 - Jesus teaches his disciples that his death is the ultimate fulfillment of the Passover meal, and that the blessings of the New Covenant are possible only because of his substitutionary death.

Matt 26:26-30 And while they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and after a blessing, He broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is My body." 27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins. 29 "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." 30 And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Luke 22:20 And in the same way He took the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup which is poured out for you is the new covenant in My blood.

Note: Understanding the way the Passover was observed yields additional insight into Jesus' statements. The Synoptic authors seem to only mention the ways that Jesus diverged from the normal Passover liturgy. The head of the household normally passed the bread out in silence—but Jesus explained that it represented his body/physical death for them. They normally drank four cups—two before the meal and two afterwards. The third cup was called the "cup of redemption," and Jesus explained its significance in vs. 28. The fourth cup was called the "cup of consummation" looking forward to God's future kingdom. In vs 29, Jesus refuses to drink this cup until he comes back. The Jews customarily ended this meal by singing Ps. 116-118. Note especially Ps. 118:6-9,17,18,22,23, which speak prophetically of Jesus' death and resurrection. See William L. Lane, *The Gospel According to Mark* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), pp. 504-509.

Note: Jesus was *not* teaching transubstantiation here. First of all, he is already referring to a symbolic meal. Secondly, they knew where his body was (in front of them!) and would understand that he was speaking metaphorically (as he often did—"I am the door;" "I am the true Vine")..

(Jer. 31:31-34) "**Behold, days are coming,**" declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, (32) not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the LORD. (33) "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "**I will put My law within them,** and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. (34) "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for **they shall all know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and **their sin I will remember no more.**"

This is an elaboration of the New Covenant blessings that had not yet been enacted ("the days are coming"): moral empowering through the Holy Spirit ("my laws within them"); personal relationship with God ("they shall all know me"); assurance of forgiveness ("their sin I will remember no more"). Jesus is saying that his death is what makes it possible for God to grant us these blessings (see also Heb. 8:6-12).

- **Summary: The blessings of the New Covenant are made possible through Jesus' death.**

At the Cross:

Jesus died as predicted with regard to:

- **Death for atonement (Isaiah 53)**
- **Place (Genesis 22, Exodus 12)**
- **Time (Passover; Dan. 9)**
- **Manner of death (Psalm 22)**

Also the temple veil was torn (Mt 27:51) symbolizing the end of the old covenant. The way to God is now open to all who come to him through Jesus' atoning death.

Post-Cross:

(1 Cor. 5:7) Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

- Paul affirms that Jesus fulfilled the symbolism of the Passover. This includes *where* and *when* the Messiah would die for our sins.

Interestingly enough, three spring festivals prefigured the work of Christ.

1. Passover prefigured Jesus' death.
2. The Sunday after Passover, First Fruits was celebrated. In this festival, early buds forming on wheat were brought as tangible evidence of a future harvest thanksgiving for God's promise - resurrection, 1 Cor 15:23 Jesus is the first fruits, tangible evidence of a future harvest of souls.
3. Pentecost (50 days = 7 weeks + day after the Sabbath following Passover) Beginning of the actual harvest where they begin the first harvest of grain.

(2 Cor. 5:21) (God) made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- Clear statement of substitutionary atonement.

(1 Pet. 1:19,20) . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.

- This was God's plan of the ages.

(1 Pet. 3:18) For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God . . .

- Clear statement of substitutionary atonement.

Heb. 9 - Point out how the Old Covenant sacrificial system was a temporary and incomplete picture of Jesus' sacrifice. Read Heb 9:11-14; 23-26.

LEVITICAL SYSTEM (O.C.)	JESUS' DEATH (N.C.)
earthly tabernacle/temple	heavenly (presence of God)
animal sacrifices	his own blood
year after year	once for all
RESULT: ceremonial cleansing only	RESULT: full salvation

Rom. 3:21-28 is one of the clearest comprehensive statements concerning substitutionary atonement.

(Rom. 3:21-28) (Rom. 3:23,24*) But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, (22) even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (25) whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; (26) for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (27) Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. (28) For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

Vs 21 says that the Old Testament clearly taught and predicted salvation through substitutionary atonement.

Vs 23,24* explains the dilemma (our sinfulness and God's righteousness) and concisely explains Jesus' atoning death as the answer.

The Old Testament believers had their sins "passed over" (vs 25) until Jesus paid for them. They were *not* forgiven by the animal sacrifices (Heb. 10:4).

Vs 26 summarizes the dilemma we mentioned at the beginning. This is how God can accept sinful people while remaining righteous himself.

Note the repeated emphasis on faith and belief in this passage. This is not universalism (salvation for all regardless of belief), but salvation by grace alone, through Christ alone, through faith alone.

Concluding Observations

- **Substitutionary atonement is the heart of biblical theology/soteriology. Apart from it, there is no salvation!** Why is it that we no longer do animal sacrifices? *Not* because we now see they are primitive, barbaric, etc., but because they have been fulfilled by the most terrible sacrifice of all! Through substitutionary atonement and the cross, we see both how serious the sin problem is to God, and how much he loves us.

- **There is important continuity between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant: People have *always* been saved by grace through faith** (Heb. 11:2), and always through Jesus' death. Old Testament believers were saved by faith through Jesus' *future* death; we are saved by faith in his *past* death. The main differences between us and Old Testament believers are that we know more clearly *how* God made this payment, we know it *has been made*, and we have the *Holy Spirit*.
- **There is also important discontinuity between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant:** Now that Jesus has fulfilled the Old Covenant system, it is *obsolete* (Heb. 8:13)! One implication of this is that New Testament Christianity should not be ritualistic. In the Old Covenant, God prescribed hundreds of rituals in careful detail. In the New Covenant, he prescribes only two rituals and is so general about them that Christians have argued for twenty centuries about how to observe them! Old Covenant worship prescribed a ritualistic approach to God, both because people could not be indwelt by God's Spirit and in order to teach God's people the elements of redemption. But now that Christ has come and God's Spirit indwells us, God wants us to relate to him personally rather than ritualistically. See Paul's explanation of this in Gal. 4:3-11. Roman Catholic and Orthodoxy's insistence on a liturgical and ritualistic spirituality (and the increasing evangelical acceptance of this notion) runs directly counter to God's movement from ritual to personal relationship.

Memory Verses

Lev. 16** - The Day of Atonement is a clear example of substitutionary atonement for the nation of Israel.

Isa. 53** - This passage makes it clear that the Old Testament sacrificial system must be fulfilled by a Person—the Servant of the Lord.

Rom. 3:23,24* - All humans fall justly under God's condemnation because of their sins, but all humans are acceptable to God if they receive Jesus' atoning death for their sins.