

"I AM COME A LIGHT INTO THE WORLD, THAT
WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH ON ME SHOULD NOT
ABIDE IN DARKNESS."

(JOHN 12:46)



6.

"THERE IS HOPE for you in Jesus Christ, Benjamin," said Uncle Cletus as he looked with tears into Benjamin's eyes.

"I know. I just don't think I can live the Christian life. It seems so hard!"

"Benjamin, we are not saved by LIVING like Christians. We are saved by BELIEVING like Christians. Salvation from sin is a gift of God given to all who believe in Jesus for it. The Bible says, 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' (John 3:16) Simple faith in Jesus Christ brings eternal salvation to every sinner, including you!"

The hand began to write on the wall of Benjamin's tomb again. This time, in blood-red ink, it wrote the word, ATONEMENT.

"Uncle! The word, atonement. What does it mean?"

"That, Benjamin, is the third thing that the Spirit of God will convict you of. He will convince you that Jesus Christ died in your place on the cross to make atonement for your sins.⁹ In the Old Testament, animal sacrifices were part of the Jewish religion. The shedding of the innocent animal's blood pointed to the future when Jesus Christ would be the ultimate sacrifice, shedding His innocent blood for the sins of the world. The Old Testament sacrifices could only cover sins, and that is basically the idea of atonement in the Old Testament: to cover. However, Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross made the complete and ultimate atonement for all sin."

"So, Jesus was better than the animal sacrifices?"

9. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." (John 16:8-11) Satan, the prince of the world system, was judged when Jesus Christ died on the cross. Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." (John 12:31) He said this in reference to his crucifixion. The atoning death of Christ on the cross was a judgment on the world system and on its leader, Satan.

"Oh yes, much better! Christ does not merely cover sin. He takes sin away! In the New Testament, the English word ATONEMENT means 'the reconciliation of God and humankind through the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ.'¹⁰ We are separated from God because of our sins. Christ's death on the cross reconciles us to God, that is, it removes sin and brings us into a state of union with Him. Come up with me into the lighthouse for a moment. I want to show you something."

Benjamin and Cletus walked out into the rain under the protection of two very large umbrellas and entered the tower. They climbed the winding staircase that led to the top. The light beamed brightly into the tossing waters. "This is it, Benjamin," said Cletus. "I do a lot of thinking up here. I thought this would be a good place to tell you the most wonderful story ever told."

"Go on, Uncle," said Benjamin, anxiously.

"About two thousand years ago, a baby was born in a manger in Bethlehem. This baby's tiny body was new to the world, but He had always existed. He was the Son of God, come to earth, and clothed in human flesh. Robed in His human body, Jesus lived among us. He experienced life as we experience it, except that He did not sin. He grew to become a man. He entered into public ministry. He was 'despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...' (Isaiah 53:3) He loved people, but His own people did not receive Him. He helped people in need. He fed the hungry and healed the sick. He was falsely charged with a crime. He was sentenced to death, the worst death you can imagine. It was a slow, torturous death of fighting for air, writhing under the most intense pain for hours. The cross was a place of torture, public humiliation and lengthy execution."

Suddenly, from the tomb, the hand pointed its long forefinger towards the ocean. Under the beam of light Benjamin could see a man in the distance, dressed in ancient clothes, with a lamb. He took the lamb, apparently his prize animal, and killed it with a large knife. The blood that flowed from it, he took and put around the door of his house. Benjamin was witnessing the ancient Jewish passover. It

10. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary 2009 definition of ATONEMENT, entry number 2.

occurred in Egypt in the 1400's B.C. As Benjamin looked in amazement, he saw a multitude of houses. A menacing figure flew overhead. He passed over each house with blood applied to the door and did nothing. On those with no blood, he swooped down in a ghastly manner and killed the firstborn child. Weeping was heard from every house where no blood was applied. It echoed through the stormy night over the sea.

Benjamin then saw something that astonished him.¹¹ A man who looked like He had been beaten beyond imagination was nailed to, and lifted up on, a cross. His blood flowed out. Benjamin saw a multitude of people. Everyone on whom the blood of this man was applied was passed over by God's judgment. Benjamin saw the man's lifeless body taken from the cross and buried. Three days passed in the sorrowful scene that he watched across the sea. He saw the stone door of the tomb roll away and the man rise back to life!

"That's Him!" cried Benjamin. "I can see Him clearly. That's Jesus Christ. That's the atonement for my sins! I saw the judgment of God falling on Him!" Thunder rolled over the waves and lightning flashed in the distance. The sinister figure in the suit, Lucifer, materialized and began to speak. Before he could utter a word, the hand pointed to Benjamin and the word REDEEMED¹² was written over him. This all happened as Benjamin fell to his knees and cried out to Jesus for mercy and forgiveness. Lucifer turned in disgust and vanished. As Benjamin continued to pray, the word, BELIEVER appeared on him. The tomb that surrounded him vanished away into the night.

11. "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider." (Isaiah 52:14,15)

12. The word *redeemed* means, *to set free by paying the price*. Jesus Christ set us free from sin by shedding His blood and paying the price for our sins on the cross. "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18,19)