

God's plan of redemption for Mankind – Explained

Genesis chapter 3 begins with the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Many people misunderstand this part of scripture since it states “Now the serpent was craftier than any of the other creatures that God had made. Some people think that this story is just a myth, a way of telling a story, but scripture actually bears out the validity of this phrase.

It does not mean that this Serpent was a real animal who was somewhat surprisingly able to talk. What it does mean is made much clearer through other scriptures, in particular 2nd Corinthians chapter 11 verse 14 where the Apostle Paul describes the enemy of our souls as being deceptive enough to masquerade as an angel of light. Matthew chapter 5 confirms that this is not a reference to an animal but a reference of a different kind.

For example, in Luke chapter 13 verse 32 onward tells of people who come up to Jesus and warn Him that Herod is looking for Him so He should beware. In verse 32 Jesus makes this reply to the people: At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.”

He replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!” Jesus does not suggest that Herod has red hair, a bushy tail and walks around on all 4 legs; He is giving a description of Herod's characteristics.

In revelation chapter 20 verses 1 to 3 we read the following: “I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years.” There you see it, the devil once more referred to as “the serpent.” This along with Paul's warning that Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light makes these verses so very much more believable.

However, does this sound familiar to you today? Many people both inside and outside of the church are saying “Did God say” on very many biblical subjects, especially the virgin birth of Jesus and the physical resurrection of the body they put on the cross. We shall take a look at both these issues a little later in this series. We shall now look at how mankind responded to God when he heard the sound of God walking in the Garden in the cool of the evening.

They ran away and hid from the presence of God, realising that they had disobeyed His command (as many nations have done and continue to do today) so instead of crying out to God in heartfelt repentance they tried to cover up their sin, and even blamed each other for it. Eve blamed Adam, Adam blamed the serpent and the serpent didn't have a leg to stand on. Since sin had now entered creation God was forced to do something about it in order to destroy it.

Verse 15 of Genesis chapter 3 describes in a cryptic way how God planned to rid creation of the sin that had now entered into it because of what “the serpent” had now done. It was deliberately

cryptic so that “the serpent” (obviously there present with God at that time in the Garden) would not be able to understand the plan of salvation that God had now put into practice. God then clothed Adam and Eve with animal skin so that they were naked. Was it the skin of a lamb?

Most people would think that the next part of the fulfilment of God’s plan of salvation for mankind would be Moses setting up the tabernacle of God and originating blood sacrifices for the sin of the community but there is something wonderful that God laid down even before the time of Moses, it was the covenant that He made with Abraham the detail of which is set out in the 15th Chapter of the book of Genesis.

Some might say that Genesis chapter 15 verse 6 is taken out of context, but in fact it is perfectly in keeping with other passages in Scripture which make things even more clear. Genesis chapter 15 verse 6 it reads: Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” There you have it, if we believe in our hearts that what has come down to us through the ages and forms The Bible today then we shall be credited with righteousness before God.

Righteousness is the exact opposite of sin, and you will see as we go through this plan of salvation for mankind that God’s plan was from the beginning to credit us with the righteousness of Jesus provided that we believe what He says in our hearts and walk in genuine fellowship with Him. In other words if you now put your complete trust in what Jesus has done and won for us through the cross then there is nothing more that needs to (or can be) added or taken away.

In Leviticus chapter 16 God introduces “The Day of Atonement” telling Moses what must be done at least once a year and will ensure that the community of God’s people (the Israelites – at this time the Hebrew slaves whom God brought out of Egypt by a mighty hand and with miracles so profound that even the Egyptian magicians could not match. You can read the instructions God gave Moses on how to carry out what must be done on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus chapter 16.

This is how Aaron is to enter the Most Holy Place: He must first bring a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

“Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. ⁷ Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering. But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat.

“Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. He is to take a censer full of

burning coals from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain.

He is to put the incense on the fire before the Lord, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the tablets of the covenant law, so that he will not die. He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.

“He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been.

He is to do the same for the tent of meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. No one is to be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel.

“Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.

“When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

“Then Aaron is to go into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. He shall bathe himself with water in the sanctuary area and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people.²⁵ He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

“The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and intestines are to be burned up. The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp.

“This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work—whether native-born or a foreigner residing among you— because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the

Lord, you will be clean from all your sins. It is a day of Sabbath rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance.

The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the tent of meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the members of the community." Take careful note of what the parallel passage says in Exodus chapter 12 verse 46 which gives a specific instruction not to break any of its bones.

Next, remember what God said to Moses about "the one who was to come". Deuteronomy chapter 18 verses 15 to 19 which reads: The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. His is what you asked of the Lord your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the Lord our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die."

The Lord said to me: "What they say is good. I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name." This means that the one who is to come (in the days of the Old Testament) would inevitably be a man. You will see the significance of this later.

Take a look at Isaiah chapters 52 and 53 (too long to copy out) and compare it with what we know from the gospels Jesus had to endure on our behalf. Now before we look at the New Testament passages which prove that we are talking about the same person, let us look at what the Angel of The Lord said to Mary when he announced that she had been chosen as the one who is/was to be the redeemer and Son of the Most High God.

The relevant passage is found in Matthew chapter 1 verse 18. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). These pages and passages of scripture have been just a glimpse of what the Old Testament books predict about Jesus, these would have been known by the priests of Jesus day but even then they failed to recognize Him, even though Jesus fulfilled a great many (all in fact) of the passages which spoke about Him. Now we shall look at just some of the prophecies Jesus fulfilled by His life, death and resurrection.

Firstly, it is clearly stated that the child born of Mary was conceived by The Holy Spirit, God Himself. It was the seed of Eve (the woman) who nurtured and gave birth to Him. Matthew chapter 1 v 16 gives the ancestry of Jesus through Joseph, the man chosen to be like a father to Jesus on earth, and Luke chapter 3 v 13 - 28 gives the ancestry of Jesus on Mary's side.

Remember, the Lamb had to be spotless, without blemish. Sin is a blemish in God's sight, therefore had Jesus not been born of a virgin and conceived by God Himself He would have inherited a sin nature, being as we are, sons of Adam, but because He is our "second Adam" there is no inheritance of sin since God is without sin and cannot tolerate it in His presence, which

means that had anyone else conceived Jesus He would be unacceptable to God right from the start of His life.

Both agree that the ancestry of Jesus goes back to the tribe of Judah. Having said all this, we must go forward now to see how Jesus acted as our High Priest, sacrificial lamb and scapegoat so that we could escape the wrath of God. Before ministering as High Priest of the whole community, the High Priest was instructed to bathe and put on linen clothing. Through reading what Jesus did with His disciples on the night of His last supper with them, we can clearly see that Jesus did bathe and put on linen clothing (John chapter 13 v 1 - 15).

Later Jesus was brought before Pilate on false charges, and led out of the city to be crucified. Like the scapegoat He had to be led outside the camp, and Jesus was taken outside the city wall (John chapter 19 verses 17). Then He had rammed on His head a crown of thorns and would have without doubt been confessing the sin of Israel and the sin of the whole community and indeed the whole world (Matthew chapter 27 v 27 and John chapter 19 verses 22 - 24).

Since it was an outrage to leave a body on a cross over the Sabbath and to make sure that He was really dead at this time, they broke the legs of the two criminals being crucified with Jesus and when they came to Jesus they found Him already dead, so there was no need to break His legs (John chapter 19 v 31).

Moments before three o'clock in the afternoon, the Jewish ninth hour, between the two evenings, Jesus cried out from the cross "It is finished" (John chapter 19 v 30). He said this because at that time He had accomplished everything on earth necessary for the salvation of all mankind, throughout the ages.

To make sure He was dead, a Roman soldier pierced Jesus side and out came blood and water. Jesus was presenting His life, Himself and His blood as a substitute before God so that we could be forgiven (John chapter 19 v 31 - 37). The Sunday following, was the day He rose from the dead. Not for our salvation, He had already accomplished that for us, but just as the people of the community of Israel knew the sacrifice for their sin had been accepted when the High Priest came out alive from the presence of God, so Jesus rose from the dead that day to prove to us that God had accepted His sacrifice, and our sins were now atoned for if only we believe and trust in Him. This way we are made members of the community. Now the community is much bigger than the community of the Israelites, it's the community of all believers who will ever live. This sacrifice was so precious to God, the forgiveness and redemption it secured is not just for one year, but for all eternity. Thanks be to God. Having completed the task of redemption of mankind so completely and successfully He could now return to glory after showing Himself resurrected to a chosen number of people.

At the tomb He had told one of the women "Do not cling to me for I have not yet ascended to my Father". I think this means "Do not try to keep me here, when I go I will send someone to take my place and be your helper forever." Remember what Jesus said to His disciples – "The works

that I have done you will do also?" He meant it not just for a chosen few 2000 years ago, but for every believer until the time of His return.

There is no doubt that many miracles are taking place today, I have seen a great many myself, so why are they not happening today? Go to www.1way2god.co.uk and this will give you a detailed explanation. See also (for only a little while longer) www.allelujah.co.uk

Blessed be God forever.

Maybe some of you will pray this prayer for the first time, but I urge everybody to pray this prayer every day: "Oh God, I acknowledge that I am a sinner and that I need a Saviour who can make me right with God, so I ask Jesus to come into my life, to be my Lord, my God, my King and my friend eternally, forgive all my sin right now I pray as I surrender my whole life now to be lived your honour and to your praise and glory. Amen.

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans chapter 10 v 9.