



**Lesson Title:** The Why's of The Gospels—Why Atonement?



**Key Concept:** The Gospels' themes are often obscure to us, but God has a reason for including them. Why atonement? Because without atonement, there can be no redemption.



**Scriptures:**

For without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness.  
(Hebrews 9:22 *New Living Translation*)

For this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, that is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
(Matthew 26:28 *New English Translation*)

**Context Scriptures:** Leviticus 17:11; Romans 6:23; 7:18–25; 1 Corinthians 15:54–57; Hebrews 9:22–10:18



**Lesson Thoughts:**

It's the first century AD, and the world is doomed. We all sin, we all fail, and we all are condemned. Adam and Eve started it thousands of years ago when they ate from the tree of knowledge, but every human since them has confirmed their choice. We've sinned, and the price for sin is clear. Sin brings death, so death will come. We may be alive for now, but what's the point? There's no hope.

God wants to redeem us. He's a good God. But he's also a just God and a God of truth. And the truth is, without bloodshed, there's no forgiveness. For our sins, the only penalty that could pay back the debt is our own death. But with the corruption of sin, even our death could never be enough. We're locked away behind the chains of the grave, forever held back from true peace with God.

In the first century world, there are a few of us, the Jews, the chosen ones, that God still helps. To those of us who are Jews, he's given sacrifices and the law of

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Moses, protections to help us against the weight of sin. But it's not enough. Millions of gallons of blood are poured out each year in Jerusalem, but the result is only temporary. The debt is never gone, and it will come due.

A man is born, a man named Jesus. He is special, holy, and pure. He hasn't sinned, and he hasn't earned the penalty of death. He is God become human, the only hope of perfection for humanity. He preaches peace, love, and truth, everything God wanted for us from the beginning. He inspires his followers, tells them how to be better. But still, the wages of sin wait. The specter of death remains, hopeless and crushing. Certainly, Jesus is blameless, and his words are true, but even if we listened now, that wouldn't help with the price we already owe. Every human has earned death, and death, our eternal oblivion, will come.

But then Jesus—God—*dies*. The blameless one, the man and the God who owes no debt, pays it. And now, hope enters the world, true hope. Jesus' blood is poured out, and our blood is no longer demanded. We have the hope of glory. Jesus rises again, the only one who could pay the price of death and still live, the only one whose power could conquer death itself. Now the hope of redemption, the restoration God promised, has truly come. The price was insurmountable, the weight unmeasurable, but Jesus paid the price, and he carried the weight. Without atonement, God's greatest gift, the redemption and restoration of the world, could not come, but now, by the blood of Christ, we can be clean, and by the death of Christ, we can live!

**Discussion Questions:**

- 1) How does it make you feel that a price had to be paid for our sins? Why didn't God just forgive us?
- 2) How does it make you feel that God paid the price for our sins? Why didn't he just let us die?
- 3) 1 Corinthians 15:55 says, "O death, where is your sting?" But we're still going to die, so what does that verse mean?
- 4) What would life be like without atonement? What is life like with atonement?

**Next Lesson:** Why the New Birth?

**Notes and Reflections**

- 1) Beyond defeating death, atonement also defeated sin. Read Romans 7:18–25, and consider: what would our lives be like without atonement?
  
- 2) If God's plan was to defeat death, why do we still die? Why did Jesus say "I am the resurrection and the life" if he was only going to resurrect himself and a couple other people? (A hint: look at the long-term plan. What will happen at the end?)

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**Notes and Reflections, cont.**