

# The Portico Notes

September 21, 2023

## Session 5

**Portico Goals:** (1) To gain clarity regarding what we believe about aspects of redemption; (2) To corporately explore what the Bible teaches and emphasizes about aspects of redemption; (3) To deepen our sense of what the Spirit would say to the churches about redemption in our strategic time.

### Q1.1: What makes an expiatory sacrifice acceptable?

Kaj: Requires **faith** (Heb 11.6).

Jeff: An expiatory sacrifice must be efficacious. *The story of Cain and Abel implies that a sacrifice must have life in it.*

Rod: Why is blood required?

Mark: God [requires that] there must be an equivalent sacrifice to the offence of the sin.

Rod: Why the shedding of blood?

Eric: Heb 9.18-22, “without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”

Jeff: Sin is death. To fix sin, a sacrifice must bring life back into the equation.

Rod: Yes, the penalty of sin is death; to expiate sin, someone must die. But what made the blood sacrifices unacceptable in Malachi’s day?

Eric: Isa 1.10-15, [people brought sacrifices, but their hands were covered with blood, i.e., the guilt of evil deeds, Isa 1.16.]

Mark: [The problem was the] **state of the heart**. [The were not acting in faith.]

Rod: Yes, “man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1Sa 16.7). The state of one’s heart, including the presence of faith, is key in making a sacrifice acceptable. To explore our question a little further, could God have chosen something other than the sacrifices or a different kind of sacrifice to expiate sin.

Jeff: [We have to assume that God’s ordaining of blood sacrifices was] not arbitrary.

Mark: God is the one who determines what is appropriate and efficacious.

Rod: Right! We have situations in the Levitical law in which the offended party can dictate the penalty or the restitution that the offender must make; the offended party also had the option to forgive the offense. **This points us to the element of Grace.** God could have required *anything* to expiate sin, including impossible penalties or restitutions such that sinners would all be condemned. Coming at it from another direction, God could have ordained an expiation for sin that was *possible* but only efficacious for Jews, not Gentiles. Grace makes the expiation of sin possible, and grace makes it efficacious for all.

Beth, what are you thinking?

Beth: [Scripture says a sacrifice must be] **Perfect without blemish.**

Rod: That's right, and the requisite perfection of a sacrifice implies something else about it.

Eric: **Cost.**

Greg: [Yes,] David understood the sacrifice must have a price costly to the penitent offerer (2Sa 24.24).

Rod: Good, so here's what we've got so far: **An acceptable sacrifice depends upon (1) Grace, (2) Right heart, (3) Perfection, (4) Cost.**

Jeff: Penitents could offer pigeons if they could not afford a lamb.

Rod: Right, so we see the sacrifice was acceptably costly relative to what the offerer could afford. Jesus would hardly have commended Zacchaeus if Zacchaeus had only promised to return fifty cents on the dollar to the people he had defrauded..

Eric: Ha, ha, don't pull an Ananias! We're back to the **heart issue.**

Kaj: There has to be fruit in keeping with repentance (Mat 3.8).

Jeff: [A cheap sacrifice] does not take sin seriously.

Eric: There's the issue of **deterrence.**

Rod: Right, that's **the fifth thing that makes a sacrifice acceptable, its deterrence value.**

## Q1.2: What made the self-sacrifice of Jesus acceptable?

Eric: The resurrection of Jesus proved the sacrifice of Jesus acceptable.

Rod: Absolutely, and that is so important, but in light of what we've been observing, what had made His sacrifice acceptable?

Jeff: **Grace.** God's gracious provision that Jesus could be our substitute. God could have had us all flagellated, or one leg cut off; we could have all had to bear some kind of suffering as well.

Beth: **Right heart.** Jesus only did what he saw the Father do, He walked in love, and in the garden he prayed, "Your will be done."

Kaj: Isa 53, Jesus was the lamb before the slaughter who did not make a defense for Himself. Jesus prayed in love even from the cross.

Rod: Yes. We see his flawless **perfection** in that.

Jeff: Yeah, the crucifixion was tougher than the 40 days in the desert. The cross was the ultimate crucible. It was the greatest temptation to stop loving.

Mark: [Hence] the one Man's obedience (Rom 5) [the many will be made righteous]. The Son learned obedience through what He suffered (Heb), and He maintained perfection through the worst trial.

Eric: Jesus had no sin; His perfection was proven (vindicated) by what He suffered. He had given Himself so fully to His Father's will. The forgiveness Jesus offered to His murderers was from the Father's heart.

Rod: What about the matter of **cost**? What did Jesus' sacrifice cost Him?

Greg: Jesus set aside equality with God (Phil 2.6-7).

Mark: [There can be] no greater sacrifice than Father's sacrifice of His Son. [Jesus] gave his life, for sinners!

Rod: Yes, sacrificing His whole life. Remember law of the scapegoat.

Kaj: [That involved the] laying on of hands so goat "carries" sins off into wilderness.

Rod: Right. Jesus carried the consequences of our sins throughout His ministry life, culminating in the sacrificial bearing of them on the cross

Eric: The goat goes off into wilderness (symbolizing) carrying people's sins into demonic realm.

Rod: That's an interesting thought. What happens in the life of Jesus right after the temptation?

Kaj: Immediate opposition, persecution.

Rod: Yes, Jesus stepped right into the battle against demonic powers, as "He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10.38).

Mark: There's more to this than I had previously considered. The depth in God's mind regarding salvation!

Kaj: Broken people need to know what Jesus has done.

Jeff: I'm moved by reflecting on the idea of Jesus carrying of our sins before [He went to] the cross, maybe even from eternity, and now the scars that remain. [The pre-crucifixion cost of bearing our sins is] illustrated in The Chosen when Jesus is [depicted as] exhausted after ministry.

Eric: Rom 8.31, "if God is for us ... He who did not spare His own Son ..."

Beth: Love, this shows me another level of the depth of God's love. His love is so deep; we don't "get it yet."

Greg: Two observations: 1. How little our American faith costs us, as compared to the cost in other countries; 2. We have cheapened the grace of God and all that goes into it.

Rod: Thank you, everyone, for thinking through these things with us today!