

The Three Phases of Atonement and The Implications for Other Metaphorical Models of Salvation

by

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Introduction

The plan of salvation is composed of three phases. This is why the Bible speaks of “salvation” in all three grammatical tenses (past, present and future).

Salvation in the Past Tense

Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2 Tim. 1:8-10 (emphasis supplied)¹

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. Titus 3:5-6 (emphasis supplied)

"But God who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" Eph. 2:4, 5 (emphasis supplied)

Salvation in the Present Tense

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1 Cor. 1:18 (emphasis supplied)

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are taken from the New King James Version and emphasis (italics) is original.

For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 2 Cor. 2:15 (emphasis supplied)

Salvation in the Future Tense

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. Matt. 10:22 (emphasis supplied)

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; Mark 16:16 (emphasis supplied)

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. John 10:9 (emphasis supplied)

But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they. Acts 15:11 (emphasis supplied)

Since God's saving activity is a process, which is accomplished in three phases over time, it should be no surprise to find that many, if not all, of the elements of the various metaphorical models used in the Word of God to present the plan of salvation, involve three phases. This is a difficult concept to understand the first time it is encountered. It may appear that the various elements of redemption are said to have been completed and yet they need to be completed. They have occurred in the past and yet their occurrence is still future. In the example cited above, God *has* saved us. He *is* saving us. And some day He *shall* save us. Until it is recognized that the different phases of a given representative element address different aspects of the sin problem, one can feel called upon to believe a rather schizophrenic gospel. Nevertheless, the concepts are readily comprehended when the unique characteristics of the different constituents are recognized.

The sin problem involves three fundamental issues: the penalty, the power and the presence. Of course the penalty for sin is eternal death. This penalty was realized for all mankind in the death of Christ. This is why the human race remains alive in spite of sin. Christ has paid the penalty. He "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). This was the first phase of the plan of redemption. Jesus *has* saved us.

The second dimension of the sin problem is its power. Sin is not merely an act which we commit. It is a power that resides within the members of every soul born on earth. The Bible calls it a "law" (Rom. 7:23). Of ourselves we cannot resist this power. It must be conquered through the aid of a power outside of ourselves. Victory over the power of sin is realized during the second phase of salvation. When the sinner receives Christ into his or her heart and surrenders each day to the power of God's love, sin is expelled from the heart. And through the power brought to believers by the Holy Spirit it need not appear in the life. Jesus promised to send the Comforter to "come along side" us. Thus, Jesus *does* save us.

But victory over sin, even to the point of character perfection is not the end of sin. One more dimension of sin remains to be vanquished. Sin remains present in our "members" (Romans 7:17) and will be present in the world in which we live even after our characters reveal the glory

of Christ completely. This unpalatable yet undeniable truth highlights the necessity for the third phase of salvation. The “law of sin” which resides in our members will not be removed until the second coming of Christ. Thus until the moment of translation, even those who have perfected Christian character will feel like the “chief of sinners”. And indeed, they remain sinners by “human nature” and they cannot see God face to face in this condition. Therefore, the third phase of salvation is essential. Jesus *shall* save us.

Scope

This paper does not attempt a comprehensive examination of the plan of salvation. It only briefly examines a few of the elements of salvation, represented in scripture by various metaphoric models. It is not our intent to prove exegetically each phase of each model. That would require a much larger effort. Rather a systematic survey of the scriptural references to each metaphor and its obvious or implied phases is reviewed. As each unique element of the different models is examined, the objective is to realize a harmony of theological thought presented by the various models. Each model looks at the plan of salvation from a slightly different vantage point and emphasizes a different aspect. Yet in the final analysis there is only one plan of salvation. Therefore, all of the models *should* be understood to present the same essential truth.

It must also be conceded that the actual plan of salvation is larger, broader and deeper than the concepts which can be conveyed by any and/or all of the representative models. This is one of the reasons the pen of inspiration records:

The Bible, perfect as it is in its simplicity, does not answer to the great ideas of God; for infinite ideas cannot be perfectly embodied in finite vehicles of thought. Instead of the expressions of the Bible being exaggerated, as many people suppose, the strong expressions break down before the magnificence of the thought, though the penman selected the most expressive language through which to convey the truths of higher education. Sinful beings can only bear to look upon a shadow of the brightness of heaven's glory (E. G. White, Letter 121, 1901).

Even sinless intelligences, that have been pondering the plan of redemption for ages, still long to look into these matters (1 Peter 1:12) and seek better understanding. The “science of salvation” shall be the study of the redeemed throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. We get only a little glimmer of this glorious truth in the earthly school of study.

Atonement – The Sanctuary Model

The sanctuary and its services, given to Israel in the wilderness, is the master model of the plan of salvation. It provides the most detailed representation of all that would be accomplished by Christ as our Redeemer, High Priest and conquering King. The earthly sanctuary was the type. The actual plan of salvation, involving the heavenly sanctuary, is the antitype. The term used to refer to God's saving activity in the sanctuary model is "atonement". In harmony with the three phases of salvation presented throughout the scriptures, there are three phases of atonement represented in the earthly sanctuary service. The sanctuary calendar, its rituals and services, and its major architectural organization, were designed to bring into focus three distinct phases of the plan of salvation.

The sacrifice was the first and most essential element of the sanctuary model. It represented the sacrifice of Christ which is the focal point of not only the sanctuary but the whole Bible.² Long before God instructed Israel to build a sanctuary, the sacrificial rituals were known and practiced. Abel offered sacrifice. Job offered sacrifice and Abraham offered sacrifices before the sanctuary model was given to Israel. Although there were various types of sacrifices presented in the sanctuary, this ceremonial ritual was *always* conducted in the outer court.³

The second symbol brought to view in the sanctuary service was the application of the blood within the sanctuary. This took place daily in the first apartment of the sanctuary and once a year in the second apartment.

Finally the third and last aspect of the sanctuary service involved the atonement on the head of the scapegoat. It is recognized that although there are three distinct phases of atonement, there is an overlapping between each phase. The first phase which took place in the courtyard is directly connected to the second phase which took place in the sanctuary. And the atonement which took place in the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary interconnects with the atonement on the head of the scapegoat.

These three aspects of atonement (outer court, Holy/Most Holy Place and scapegoat) represented the three phases of atonement in the antitypical sanctuary service which began when Christ became the Passover Lamb and was sacrificed upon the cross.

Daily Atonement – Outer Court

The altar of burnt offerings was in the outer court of the earthly sanctuary. The Lord Himself had kindled a fire which consumed the sacrifices on this altar. It was intended to burn continually and was never to be deliberately extinguished. Each morning a sacrifice was laid upon it, which burned all day. And each evening another sacrifice was placed upon it which

² "The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary" (E. G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 190).

³ There is one exception. The ritual sacrifice of the red heifer, apparently a very rare ceremony, was conducted outside of the camp of Israel.

burned all night. Thus there was a continual sacrifice being consumed in the outer court on behalf of all.

2 Chronicles 13:10-11 "But as for us, the LORD *is* our God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests who minister to the LORD *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *attend* to *their* duties. ¹¹ "And they burn to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense . . .

Leviticus 6:8-13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ⁹ "Command Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This *is* the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering *shall be* on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. . . . ¹² 'And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order on it; and he shall burn on it the fat of the peace offerings. ¹³ 'A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out.

This sacrifice closely represents the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross. The sacrifice which burned on the altar continually was the means by which pardon was granted to all for all sins even sins which were unconscious, unknown and unconfessed. The blood of this sacrifice was not brought into the sanctuary. This phase of atonement was completed in its entirety in the outer court. This was a type of the atonement and forgiveness which took place at the cross before Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary as our Great High Priest. All of the elements of the earthly sanctuary service which took place in the "outer court" represented the aspects of the plan of redemption which took place on earth.⁴ Just as the offering of the sacrificial victim in the passages above took place in the outer court, Christ died upon the earth, in the outer court of the heavenly sanctuary. When His body was placed upon the altar (the cross) and His blood was poured out at the base of the altar, atonement was made for the sins of the world.⁵

It has been argued by some Seventh-day Adventists that atonement always took place in the sanctuary and only in the sanctuary. In other words there was no atonement until the priest entered the sanctuary. However, Leviticus chapter four provides clear examples of atonement taking place in the outer court.

Leviticus 4:27-31 ' If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and is guilty, ²⁸ 'or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a

⁴ "The church of God upon the earth is one with the church of God above. Believers on the earth, and those who have never fallen in heaven, are one church. Every heavenly intelligence is interested in the assemblies of the saints, who on earth meet to worship God in spirit and in truth, and in the beauty of holiness. In the inner court of heaven, they listen to the testimonies of the witnesses for Christ in the outer court on earth. And the praise and thanksgiving that come from the church below, are taken up in the heavenly anthem, and praise and rejoicing resound through the heavenly courts because Christ has not died in vain for the fallen sons of Adam" (E. G. White, General Conference Bulletin, 2-15-95).

⁵ "Christ's death on the cross paid the ransom for every human being. All may overcome, because Christ has made an atonement for the sins of the whole world" (E. G. White, manuscript 140, 1903, *Lift Him Up*, p. 235).

female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. ²⁹ 'And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. ³⁰ 'Then the priest shall take *some* of its blood with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all *the remaining* blood at the base of the altar. ³¹ 'He shall remove all its fat, as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a sweet aroma to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

Additional examples of atonement in the outer court may be found in Leviticus 4:27-31 and 4:32-35. Therefore, we must acknowledge that atonement did take place in the outer court. And thus we conclude that the daily morning and evening sacrifices, which took place entirely in the outer court, also provided atonement for the forgiveness (i.e. pardon) of sins. The Spirit of Prophecy also clearly teaches that atonement took place at the cross.⁶ This parallels the first phase of salvation, also referred to as justification, which occurred at the cross, as we shall soon demonstrate.

Daily Atonement – First Apartment

In addition to the daily morning and evening sacrifice which took place entirely in the outer court for “forgiveness” (i.e. pardon), there were daily sacrifices for the forgiveness and cleansing of known sins. These could have taken place in either the outer court, as shown in Leviticus 4:27-31 above, or the first apartment of the earthly sanctuary.

Leviticus 4:13-20 ' Now if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which should not be done, and are guilty; ¹⁴ 'when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁵ 'And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD. Then the bull shall be killed before the LORD. ¹⁶ 'The anointed priest shall bring some of the bull's blood to the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁷ 'Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil. ¹⁸ 'And he shall put *some* of the blood on the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ¹⁹ 'He shall take all the fat from it and burn *it* on the altar. ²⁰ 'And he shall do with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

⁶ “He [Christ] planted the cross between Heaven and earth, and when the Father beheld the sacrifice of His Son, He bowed before it in recognition of its perfection. ‘It is enough,’ He said. ‘The Atonement is complete.’” (E. G. White, The Review and Herald, Sept. 24, 1901, Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 7, pg. 459)

This sacrifice of atonement was not merely for the forgiveness (i.e. pardon) of sin. The context of the event gives evidence that it also involved a certain degree of *cleansing* from sin. As the people became aware of their sin and brought the sacrifice to the temple, they were symbolically cleansed of sin by transferring it from themselves to the animal victim. Subsequently the sin was symbolically transferred to the sanctuary by the priests via the blood of the victim.

Thus there was a fundamental difference between the morning and evening sacrifices which were offered by the priests and the sacrifices which were brought by the people. In the daily morning and evening sacrifice, no explicit acknowledgment of any specific sin was made and only pardon was provided. But as the sinner(s) brought their sacrifice to the sanctuary, to be sacrificed because of a specific known sin, the primary issue was cleansing and not pardon. The Bible teaches that pardon could occur before the sin was acknowledged. For example:

Isaiah 44:22 I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

Here the Lord reveals that He has already “blotted out” the people’s sins. And in response to what He has done He calls on them to return to Him. In this context the expression “blotted out” can only mean pardon. It cannot mean cleansing from sin. The cleansing can only occur as the sinner repents and returns to the Lord. Therefore, cleansing begins with the second phase of atonement.

Most Holy Place Atonement Rituals

On one day each year there was a Day of Atonement. This was the only day on which the high priest and only the high priest could enter the Most Holy Place of the earthly sanctuary.

Leviticus 16:2 and the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother not to come at *just* any time into the Holy *Place* inside the veil, before the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, lest he die; for I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

The one day of the year when Aaron could enter the Most Holy Place, inside the veil, was explicitly defined.

Leviticus 16:29-31 " *This* shall be a statute forever for you: In the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, you shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether* a native of your own country or a stranger who dwells among you.
³⁰ "For on that day *the priest* shall make atonement for you, to cleanse you, *that* you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. ³¹ "It is a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. *It is* a statute forever.

On the Day of Atonement, the high priest first made atonement for himself and his family.

Leviticus 16:11 " And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which *is* for himself.

Leviticus 16:14 "He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle *it* with his finger on the mercy seat on the east *side*; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

After he had made atonement for himself and his household with the blood of the bull, he then made atonement for the people with the blood of the goat.

Leviticus 16:15-16 " Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which *is* for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. ¹⁶ "So he shall make atonement for the Holy *Place*, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.

After the high priest had made atonement for himself, his household with the blood of the bull and he had made atonement for the assembly with the blood of the Lord's goat, (in that order) he would then make atonement for the sanctuary using both the blood of the bull and the blood of the Lord's goat.

Leviticus 16:18-19 "And he shall go out to the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. ¹⁹ "Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.

This completed the second phase of the atonement which was for the cleansing of sin from the hearts of the people and from the sanctuary. This parallels the second phase of salvation or justification as we shall further develop. One final phase of atonement remained to be accomplished.⁷

Atonement via the Scapegoat

After the atonement was completed for the blotting out of the sins of the people and the cleansing of the sanctuary the Bible says:

⁷ It should be noted that there is a difference here between the type and the anti-type. In the typical service the high priest made atonement for his own sins with the blood of the bull before making atonement for the sins of the people with the goat. Christ, did not need to atone for His own sins. Thus the earthly process of atonement can be said to have four phases, while the anti-type only has three.

Leviticus 16:20-22 "And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. ²¹ "Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. ²² "The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.

The purpose of this symbolic ceremony was stated at the beginning of Leviticus chapter four where the selection of the two goats was described.

Leviticus 16:10 "But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, *and* to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

This atonement on the head of the scapegoat was the final act of the atonement process in the typical sanctuary service. It should be noted that although the Bible uses the term "atonement" in reference to the scapegoat, this was not a "blood atonement". The scapegoat, which represented Satan, was not killed in the typical sanctuary atonement. The typical service does not address the death of Satan. The scapegoat was only banished into the wilderness, never to return. Therefore, the scapegoat did not provide pardon or redemption from sins. "Without the shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22, see also Lev. 17:11). Thus, there is no validity to the criticisms which have suggested that this doctrine makes Satan into a savior. At this point in the atonement process, the sins of the people have already been pardoned, cleansed and blotted out. Yet, a final resting place for sin needed to be found in order for the symbolic movement of the sins to be complete. A brief review of the course "traveled" by the sins in the typical sanctuary rituals illuminates the significance of the final atonement on the head of the scapegoat.

When an Israelite recognized that he had committed a sin he took his sacrifice to the sanctuary. Upon arrival in the courtyard the sin was transferred from the person to the sacrifice as the sinner laid his hands on the head of the substitute. Then the sin was transferred from the sacrifice to the priest as he handled the blood of the sacrificial victim. Next it was transferred from the priest to the sanctuary.

On occasion this transfer to the sanctuary involved sprinkling the blood before the veil. (Lev. 4:17) The veil was the dividing wall between the Holy Place and the Most Holy place. It was also the point of entry, or the "door", into the Most Holy Place. Thus, sprinkling of the blood before the veil, or the "door", carried deep significance. A review of some prior history, associated with the sacrificial system, illuminates this point.

Genesis records that when Cain and Abel offered sacrifices Cain's offering was not accepted because he had not followed the instructions given concerning the sacrifices.⁸ As a result his countenance fell and he was "very angry" (Gen. 4:5). The Lord condescended to speak with this disobedient first born son of Adam.

⁸ "But Cain, disregarding the Lord's direct and explicit command, presented only an offering of fruit." (E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 71)

Genesis 4:6-7 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ "If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

In the analogy sin is depicted as a serpent or a beast of prey lying in wait at the "door" to destroy the occupant of the house. The meaning of the symbolism can hardly be misunderstood. The person responsible for the sin (i.e. the occupant of the house) is in danger of being completely overcome and destroyed by the sin which has already been committed. James says, "When sin is full grown it brings forth death" (James 1:15). If the sin lies at my door, I am the one at fault and therefore acutely vulnerable. If sin lies at your door, you are the one at fault and therefore acutely vulnerable. Thus when the blood was sprinkled before the veil, the "door" of the Most Holy Place, it represented the idea that the sin lay at God's door and implied that He was the One at fault and therefore in some sense acutely vulnerable.

Through this symbolism the typical sanctuary service revealed the awe inspiring truth that God has been assuming the blame for sin since its very inception. He has not only taken the blame, He has also taken the guilt, the condemnation and the penalty. But He is not responsible in the sense of being at fault for the existence of sin. It is true that God has allowed sin to come into existence and He has allowed it to propagate for thousands of years. Yet, His decision to allow it is one of the elements of His dealings with angels and with men, which is to be vindicated through the atonement represented in the typical sanctuary service.

The atonement on the head of the scapegoat does not provide forgiveness of sins in either the sense of judicial pardon or experiential cleansing. Although an aspect of cleansing takes place during the third phase of the atonement, the sins are not purged by the sacrifice of the scapegoat, since it is not sacrificed. Nevertheless, the term "atonement" is appropriate because the events associated with the scapegoat do involve the final disposition of that terrible phenomenon which has brought separation between God and His earthly children. In the symbolic representations of the typical sanctuary rituals, "atonement" was the process of "moving" sin from one location to another. This "movement" brought pardon, forgiveness and final cleansing. Therefore, this "movement" of sin is of the utmost significance. Not until the final move, when an appropriate resting place was found for sin, could the atonement be considered complete.

The manner of the removal of the sins from the sanctuary, placing it on the head of the scapegoat, represented the fact that the ultimate responsibility for sin did not rest with God but with Satan. In the antitypical parallel it is then that the saints will finally see and understand that God is "true" (Romans 3:3, Rev. 15:3). Until that time, the saints have questions. For examples we can read the experience of Job or we can consider the symbolic picture of the souls under the altar of Revelation chapter six. We can contemplate the cognitive dissonance articulated by Moses, the meekest man on earth, when he said to God "If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now" (Numbers 11:15). God's handling of the great controversy has not always been understood or appreciated even by those who believe in Him. Therefore, it is essential that God be completely cleared of all responsibility for sin and of all of the enemy's charges, before the watching intelligences of the universe can embrace Him as their eternal King with no

reservations or misgivings. Thus, the laying of the sins on the head of the scapegoat and banishing him into the wilderness is an essential phase of the vindication of God. In the typical service, after the sins were placed on the head of the scapegoat and borne away into the wilderness the sins were regarded as forever separated from God's people.⁹ In the corresponding events of the antitype this final separation from sin brings final and complete union with God, which is rightfully called "atonement".¹⁰

Atonement in Three Phases - Typical

Thus we have seen that in the earthly sanctuary there were three phases of atonement:

- a) A continual sacrifice of atonement in the court yard.
- b) Daily and annual atonement in the Holy/Most Holy Place.
- c) A final ritual of atonement on the head of the scapegoat.

The significance of each phase is distinct and essential.

- 1) The atonement in the courtyard was an atonement of forgiveness (i.e. pardon).
- 2) The atonement in the tabernacle was an atonement of cleansing and/or blotting out.
- 3) The atonement on the head of the scapegoat was an atonement of final removal and separation.

Each phase of the atonement addressed a different dimension of the sin problem. Thus the process of atonement was not regarded as complete until the final atonement on the head of the scapegoat, the final ceremonial removal of sin and the instigator of sin, represented by the scapegoat which was banished, from the camp of Israel. This brought closure to the ritual ceremony of processing sin.

The Anti-typical Sanctuary Service

When Christ died upon the cross, type met anti-type. The veil of the earthly sanctuary was torn from top to bottom by an unseen hand, indicating that the significance of the earthly sanctuary had passed and the people of God were now to focus their attention upon the true sanctuary service which the symbolic rituals had foreshadowed. This anti-typical sanctuary service, the actual plan of salvation, involves a three phased process of atonement which exactly parallels the three phases seen in the type.

⁹ "Then in his character of mediator the priest took the sins upon himself, and, leaving the sanctuary, he bore with him the burden of Israel's guilt. At the door of the tabernacle he laid his hands upon the head of the scapegoat and confessed over him 'all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat.' And as the goat bearing these sins was sent away, they were, with him, regarded as forever separated from the people. Such was the service performed 'unto the example and shadow of heavenly things.' Hebrews 8:5' (E. G. White, Patriarchs and Prophets, pg. 355).

¹⁰ It should be noted that although the banishing of Satan into the wilderness for the millennium takes place approximately simultaneous with the cleansing of the natures of the redeemed, there is no causal relationship between the two. Yet the two events both belong in the third phase of the atonement being similar in nature.

Phase 1

As the process of atonement in the earthly sanctuary began with the sacrifice, the first phase of the true atonement began with the sacrifice of the anti-typical Lamb at the cross, two thousands years ago.

1 Corinthians 5:7 For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

Romans 5:11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement. (KJV)

Phase 2

The second phase of the anti-typical atonement began as Christ entered the true sanctuary, in heaven, in 31 A.D. This phase of atonement is composed of two parts, represented by the daily and the annual atonements of the typical service. The annual service of the earthly sanctuary met its anti-type in the service which began in the heavenly sanctuary in 1844 A.D. This phase of atonement will be completed immediately before the second coming of Christ. (A brief review of scriptural support for the 1844 date is presented in Appendix A.)

Phase 3

The third phase of the anti-typical atonement begins at the second coming of Christ. The scapegoat represents Satan. Christ, our Great High Priest will remove His priestly garments and don His kingly robe and come forth from the heavenly sanctuary and lay the responsibility for the sins of all of the redeemed upon the head of Satan. And he (Satan) will be left in the “wilderness” (the earth in its desolated condition) for one thousand years. The book of Revelation describes these events in symbolic language.

Revelation 20:1-3 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ² He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; ³ and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

Atonement in Three Phases – Anti-Typical

Thus we see three phases of atonement in the anti-typical sanctuary service, the actual plan of salvation, which were represented in the types and shadows of the earthly sanctuary.

- 1) There was a daily service of atonement in the outer court via the morning and evening sacrifices, corresponding to the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (31 A.D.).

- 2) Next there were the daily and the annual rituals which took place in the two apartments of the earthly sanctuary corresponding to the ministry of Christ in the Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary since 31 A.D. and Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary since 1844.
- 3) Finally there is an atonement made on the head of the scapegoat which represents the “binding” of Satan at the second advent of Christ which continues throughout the millennium. During this phase of atonement, Satan is revealed as the one responsible for sin and the vindication of God is finally complete in the minds of all the heavenly intelligences and the minds of all of the redeemed. This phase of the atonement also entails an essential practical parallel experience for God’s people, which was not addressed in the typical service. The temple represented God’s dwelling place. But it also represented the people. “What know you not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?” (1 Cor. 6:19) The removal of sins from the temple is parallel and consistent with removal of sin from the human nature of the redeemed. Simultaneous with the placing of the sins upon Satan, God’s people will be “. . . changed, in a moment in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Cor. 15:51 - 52). Sin which dwells in them (i.e. the law of sin in our members Rom. 7:20, 23) will be removed. Thus the atonement on the head of the scapegoat also corresponds with the end of sin as a nagging temptation and a vexing environmental presence in the experience of the believers.

We shall now demonstrate how the three phases of atonement correspond to other terms used in other Biblical metaphors of salvation. The sanctuary is the master model of the plan of salvation. Three phases of atonement are clearly taught in the scriptures. Therefore we should not be surprised to find that the other models of salvation also fit within a three phase theological architecture.

Forgiveness – The Legal Model

The major term used for the salvation process in the Sanctuary Model examined above is “Atonement”. The Bible also presents salvation using what has been referred to as the “Legal Model”. The Legal Model uses the terms “debt” and “forgiveness” to represent God’s saving act. The modern legal system also uses these terms. For example a person is said to have paid a “debt to society” when he/she leaves prison.

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

In this Biblical model, instead of speaking of sin and forgiveness the terms debt and forgiveness are used. But we understand debts to represent sins. It is a matter of using different terms, in each unique model. The same essential truth is being taught. The question is what is meant by the term “forgiveness”, which is also used in other models including the Sanctuary Model.

We would like to suggest that there are two unique aspects of forgiveness which occur in three different phases corresponding to the three phases of atonement presented in the Sanctuary Model. The original text of the New Testament uses two special terms to refer to these two different aspects of forgiveness, “charizomai” and “aphiemi”¹¹. In Colossians one phase of forgiveness is presented:

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

In 1 John another phase of forgiveness is presented:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Colossians uses the word “charizomai” but 1 John uses the term “aphiemi”. These two terms communicate very different concepts. They refer to two unique aspects of forgiveness. The definition of charizomai is to pardon, to cancel a debt, to frankly forgive. Colossians is referring to this first phase of forgiveness. It involves a legal acquittal while the second phase involves separating the sinner from his/her sins (i.e. cleansing). Charizomai, which begins with the prefix “chari”, which comes from the Greek word “charis”, meaning grace, is not initiated by the one being forgiven. Charizomai is a unilateral pardon based upon grace as opposed to being contingent upon repentance and confession. It is unconditional so far as man’s qualifications are concerned and rooted in the mercy and love of God toward the undeserving, who have not even asked to be forgiven.

¹¹ The original text of the New Testament actually includes three words translated as “forgive”, charizomai, aphiemi and apoluo. Further study may reveal that apoluo is the appropriate term for the third phase of forgiveness. But as of this date that conclusion is in the opinion of the authors very doubtful.

The Old Testament also uses different terms for forgiveness including: calach, nasa and kaphar.

Aphiemi on the other hand comes from two root words “apo” and “hiemi”. Apo means “from” and hiemi means “send forth” or “send away”. Thus aphiemi has the meaning of sending forth from or sending away from. It conveys the thought of two entities being separated. This is why aphiemi is also translated as “left” thirty-six times in the KJV. Charizomai is never translated as “left”. Aphiemi is translated as “leave” eleven times in the KJV. When one entity leaves another you have separation taking place. Charizomai is never translated as “leave”. Aphiemi is also translated as “leaving”, “leaveth”, “forsook”, “forsaken” “put away”, “sent away” and “alone”. Charizomai is never translated by any of these terms. Thus we see that aphiemi involves the concept of separation from sin but charizomai only refers to a legal pardon based upon grace.

Charizomai, which is used in Col. 2:13, took place in the first phase of the atonement at the cross of Christ. Aphiemi does not take place until the sinner comes to faith in Christ and asks for forgiveness. When we understand the cost of the pardon and the implications of continued sinning (crucifying Christ afresh) we do not want to sin anymore. We want to be cleansed. Separation from sin (i.e. cleansing) is associated with the second phase of the atonement.

Yet there is a sense in which the cleansing (the gift of aphiemi) will not be complete until the second coming of Christ. Although the 144,000 will have received the fullness of the character of Christ, they will still have sinful flesh (i.e. sin dwelling in their flesh. Romans 7:20). Thus they will not be completely separated from sin until they have new natures. This does not occur during the second phase of atonement. It occurs during the third phase of atonement at the second advent, at the same time that the scapegoat is banished into the wilderness.¹² The symbolic act of placing the sins on the head of the scapegoat and exiling it in the wilderness represented the act of forever separating sin from God’s people. Thus the changing of our natures from “corruption” to “incorruption” (1 Cor. 15:51-53) in the third phase of the anti-typical atonement includes forever separating sin from the people of God.

The first phase of atonement is associated with charizomai, the second and third phases of atonement are associated with aphiemi. They both deal with separating sin from the people of God. The first phase of forgiveness is only a legal pardon. The second phase of forgiveness is a spiritual separation dealing with character. The third phase is a physical separation from sin dealing both with the presence and the nature of sin (sinful human nature).

Therefore we conclude that there are two types of forgiveness which take place in three phases corresponding to the three phases of atonement.

¹² Again we note that although forgiveness (aphiemi) does take place at the beginning of the third phase of the atonement (i.e. the atonement on the head of the scapegoat) there is no intrinsic relationship between the two events. Being similar in nature they belong to the same genre but there is no causal relationship between them and one event does not depend upon the other. The final vindication of God *does* depend upon the punishment of the scapegoat but the cleansing of the natures of the redeemed does not.

Reconciliation – The Family Model

Consistent with the Bible teaching of three phases of atonement and three phases of forgiveness, there are also three phases of “reconciliation”. Reconciliation is the term for salvation which is used in the Family Model. We are all children of God but we have become estranged from God due to sin. We have become alienated (Eph. 2:12) and even enemies of God (Romans 5:10). Because of sin we were banished from the Garden of Eden but more significantly we were banished from the physical presence of God. (Gen. 3:23, 24) As exiles we cannot see His face.

Yet through the gospel Paul explains that we were “reconciled” to God through the death of His Son.

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

This is the first phase of reconciliation. This phase of reconciliation did not wait for us to believe. It happened when Christ died. Christ died for all (2 Cor. 5:15). Therefore, through His death reconciliation was unilaterally accomplished in Christ for all mankind. However, in the book of Corinthians the same apostle explains that we need to “be reconciled to God”.

II Corinthians 5:18-20 Now all things *are* of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.²⁰ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.

If we have been reconciled and yet need to be reconciled, there must be at least two different phases of reconciliation. Otherwise the issue becomes “irreconcilable”. What does the Bible mean when it says we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son?

To reconcile means to cause the hostility to cease between two parties. But there is another definition. It also means to harmonize or settle inconsistencies.

The law of God demanded the death of the human race the moment that Adam sinned. (1 Cor. 15:56) But God “passed over” or “left unpunished” the sins of mankind up until the cross.

Romans 3:25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, (emphasis supplied)

This “passing over” created an apparent *inconsistency* between the mercy of God and the justice of God. This inconsistency was *reconciled* at the cross. Thus we were reconciled to God. His justice no longer demands our destruction. The legal penalty (eternal death) was fully paid at the cross. Thus a legal reconciliation was effected for every soul.

Although the legal requirements have been satisfied and we are reconciled on legal basis, we are not reconciled to God experientially unless we believe this good news. Thus the injunction of Paul is to “be reconciled to God”. When we appreciate the cost of our reconciliation we are reconciled to God by faith. This is good news!

Yet a problem remains. We still cannot return to our Father’s house. The banishment that sin has caused remains in effect. Moses did not understand this when he asked to see God’s face (Ex. 33:18). Yet Christ told him frankly, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live" (Ex. 33:20). The same is true of us and it will be true of the one-hundred-forty-four thousand. Although the first phase of the Atonement is complete and the second phase is well underway, we still cannot see God’s face. The reconciliation, the complete lifting of our banishment and our return to the Father’s house cannot take place until the third phase of the Atonement. Then our natures will be changed, we shall be like Him and we shall see God “face to face” (See 1 John 3:2).

Thus we conclude that there are three phases of Reconciliation corresponding to three phases of Atonement, and three phases of forgiveness.

Redemption – The Slave Market Model

In the Slave Market Model, we were sold into sin by Adam, the head of the human race.

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.

Not only were we sold into sin by Adam, but we have endorsed Adam's choice and also sold ourselves into sin.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.

In order for a slave to be set free his freedom had to be purchased. Or in other words he had to be "redeemed". Thus the Bible teaches that we were redeemed by the blood of Christ.

1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

Nevertheless even though we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ and we are legally the property of God we must also give ourselves to God in order to totally belong to Him both legally and experientially. He does not take that which is rightfully His by force.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?
²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Yet after we come to Christ and learn to "glorify God in [our] body" we still have sin dwelling in us and we long to be free from sin that we might serve God without the struggle that currently exists in our flesh. This struggle will go on until the second advent at which time the redemption of our bodies will take place.

Romans 8:23 Not only *that*, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.

Therefore we conclude that there are three phases of redemption, corresponding to three phases of atonement, three phases of forgiveness and three phases of reconciliation. Redemption will not be complete until the third phase.

Judgment – Judicial Model

The Judicial Model is perhaps the most significant model of salvation outside of the Sanctuary Model. The terms judge or judgment appear in nearly every book of the Bible. In this section we shall see that the judgment has three phases corresponding to the three phases of the other models.

Just before Jesus went to the cross He announced that the first phase of judgment would take place at the cross.

John 12:31-33 "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *peoples* to Myself." ³³ This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

The first phase of the judgment of the world took place at the cross. At the cross, Christ was condemned for our sins and He paid the legal penalty for every sin ever committed, except for the unpardonable sin. But the Bible also teaches another phase of judgment.

Acts 17:30-31 "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹ "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead."

These words were penned after the cross. Two more phases of judgment were yet to come, after the cross.

Comparing Daniel chapter seven and Daniel chapter eight and coupling that together with Daniel chapter nine we can determine when the second phase of judgment would transpire.

Daniel 7:9-10 I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment *was* white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne *was like* the fiery flame, *and* his wheels *as* burning fire. ¹⁰ A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

The judgment scene of Daniel seven follows immediately after the activity of the little horn. The cleansing of the sanctuary of Daniel chapter eight is brought to view immediately after the activity of the little horn. Thus based upon the principles of parallelism we conclude that the judgment takes place during the same time frame as the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. The second phase of judgment began in 1844.

Yet one more phase of judgment remains after the completion of the cleansing of the sanctuary.

Revelation 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no

place for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

This judgment takes place at the time of the second resurrection, after the millennium. It is associated with the third phase of the atonement and the final separation of sin from the people of God.

Thus we have seen that there are three phases of judgment. One associated with the first phase of atonement, at the cross. One associated with the second phase of atonement, during the anti-typical Day of Atonement. And the final phase of judgment associated with the third phase of the Atonement.

Therefore we conclude that there are three phases of judgment corresponding to three phases of atonement, three phases of forgiveness, three phases of reconciliation and three phases of redemption. Judgment will not be complete until the third phase.

Justification – Judicial Model

Having seen the three phases of each of the various models of the plan of salvation, all of which correspond to the three phases of the master model of salvation, the Sanctuary, it should be expected that we will see three phases of justification presented in the Judicial Model.

To justify means to set right or to make right. It can involve an actual change in the thing which is justified or it can involve showing why no change is needed in the thing being justified. Instead there is change in the minds of those who witness the justification. For example when the right hand margin of a document is “justified”, it is made even by changes in the spacing of the characters of the document. But when a purchase order is “justified” it is shown to be right based upon the conditions already existing in the organization or institution in which the purchase order is processed.

Likewise in the Bible there is more than one use of the term justification. When we speak of a sinner being justified, we are referring primarily to the act of making the person right in the eyes of God (Gal. 2:16).

Galatians 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (KJV)

But when the Bible speaks of the justification of God (Romans 3:4), it cannot mean “to make righteous” since God is already righteous.

Romans 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be ¹justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome ²when thou art judged. (KJV)

Thus it is helpful to first realize that the term justification has more than one meaning.

Phase 1

When Jesus died upon the cross, the Legal Model, presented in the Bible, teaches that we were forgiven or pardoned.

Colossians 2:13 And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

This is consistent with atonement taking place in the outer court of the earthly Sanctuary. (An exegetical examination of Col. 2:11-14 may be found in Appendix B.)

2 Chronicles 13:11 "And they burn to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense;

This is consistent with reconciliation taking place at the cross.

Romans 5:10 For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

It is consistent with redemption taking place at the cross.

1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

It is also consistent with judgment of the world which occurred at the cross.

John 12:31 "Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out."

Therefore, it should not be unexpected or difficult to understand that we were also justified at the cross.

Romans 5:18 Therefore, as through one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act *the free gift came* to all men, resulting in justification of life.

Romans 4:24-25 It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, ²⁵ who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.

Romans 3:23-24 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

These texts make clear that all were justified when Jesus died. That is all were justified unto probationary life not eternal life. Some have suggested that it is eternal life which is spoken of in Romans 5:18 because the term used in the original language for life is "zoe". However, *zoe* does not necessarily refer to eternal life. It can be used to refer to either eternal life or temporal life. For example:

James 4:13-14 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; ¹⁴ whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

The word translated as "life" in verse 14 is "zoe".

1 Corinthians 15:19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

Here again the word translated “life” is “zoe” in the Greek. Therefore, we see no Bible support for the idea that “zoe” always means eternal life. The context in which it is used must dictate whether it refers to temporal or eternal life.

In Romans 5:18 the reference is to “all men” or “all mankind”. It says justification came upon all. This cannot be justification unto eternal life because only those who are justified by faith are justified unto eternal life. And unfortunately all mankind do not have faith. (2 Thes. 3:2) Therefore we conclude that Romans 5:18 and the other texts which speak of all men being justified, speak of justification unto temporal life. The law of God demanded our immediate annihilation, the moment we sinned. But the death of Christ has fulfilled the laws demands on our behalf, legally justifying our continued existence. That is justification unto probationary life.

Phase 2

Every individual human soul, believers and unbelievers alike, were made right in relation to God’s law, as it relates to the penalty. The justice of the law has been met on our behalf. Nevertheless, in order for the righteousness of the law to be fulfilled in us, we must be justified by faith.

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

Galatians 2:16 "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

Galatians 3:11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith."

Galatians 3:24 Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us* to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

Please note that under the first phase of salvation all were justified unto life. But under the second phase of salvation only the believers are justified unto eternal life. (1 John 5:11-12)

Phase 3

To justify means to “make right”. We need to be “made right” (i.e. justified) before we can be said to be fully forgiven (Legal Model), fully reconciled (Family Model), fully redeemed (Slave Market Model), and fully judged (Judicial Model). Not until then will the atonement be complete in our experience (Sanctuary Model). As long as there is sin dwelling in our mortal flesh, we are not fully “justified”. We need to be “made right” by nature before we can see God

face to face. This is the final phase of justification. It takes place at the second coming of Christ, during the third phase of the plan of salvation.

After Christ has completed His work of intercession and judgment (i.e the second phase of salvation) in the Heavenly Sanctuary, the third phase of atonement will commence with these words:

Revelation 22:11-12 He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still." ¹² " And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

The word “righteous” come from the same Greek root word as the word “just” (dikaioo). Therefore, this declaration of righteousness, acknowledging that there are some on earth who have been made righteous in character through the faith of Jesus, begins the final process of justification. It involves the making right of the people of God with respect to their natures. They will not be able to stand before God clothed with “white robes” (a symbol of righteousness) until the process of justification is complete. Those who enter heaven must be made right with respect to God’s law as it relates to the penalty and its righteous demands. They must be made right in character. In their mouths there must be found “no guile”. They must be without “fault before the throne of God” (Rev. 14:5). And they must also be made right in nature. Sin cannot be “dwelling in [their] members” (Rom. 7:19) when they stand before God. They must be justified in all three phases.

This is why those of the human family who are now in heaven are referred to as “just men”. They have been fully “justified”. They are no longer “by nature the children of wrath” (Eph. 2:3).

Hebrews 12:22-23 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the general assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect,

When the final generation shall have overcome, the righteous saints of all ages will rise to heaven having experienced the fullness of the atonement, in all three phases, along with all of the elements of the various metaphorical models of salvation. Then they will be fully and completely justified, legally, experientially and by nature. Therefore they will also be counted among those “just men [human beings] made perfect”.

Conclusion

In the third division of his epistle to the Romans, Paul speaks of the justification of man:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:23-24).

To demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus (Romans 3:26).

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law (Romans 3:28).

Although Romans three makes clear reference to the justification of man the main focus of Romans three is not the justification of man. The major emphasis is the justification of God.

For what if some did not ¹ believe? shall their unbelief make the ² faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That Thou mightest be ¹ justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome ² when Thou art judged. (Romans 3:4, KJV).

Here Paul makes reference to the “judgment”. But in this very unusual reference it is not the fate man that rests with the heavenly court. It is God’s own case which is at stake. Paul sees His case as so supremely important that God *must* win even if “every man” must be condemned as a “liar”. He alludes to God’s pending judgment and necessary vindication again in verse five when he asks “Is God unjust . . .?”. He answers the question by exclaiming “Certainly not!” (verse 6) Next he quotes at length from the Old Testament to prove that man need not be falsely accused or unjustly condemned in order to make God look good. All men are certainly unrighteous but God does not need us to improve His image.

In verse twenty-one says “now the righteousness of God . . . is revealed”.

Verse twenty-two says “even the righteousness of God”

Verse twenty-five tells us that “God set forth” Jesus “to demonstrate His righteousness”.

Verse twenty-six repeats the thought “to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just”.

Thus the apostle has come full circle. He begins the chapter with question of whether God’s faith is sufficient and effective and whether God is “true”. He ends by saying God has been demonstrated to be “just”. This is the burden of the chapter. This is the greatest question that the universe has ever contemplated. And the justification of God is the great objective of the plan of redemption.

The pen of inspiration illuminates this thought.

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin (Ellen G. White, *Patriarch and Prophets*, p. 68).

We have seen that all of the metaphorical models of salvation incorporate three phases to deal with the three corresponding dimensions of the sin problem, its penalty, its power and its presence. In each of these phases of salvation God has been vindicated.

Phase 1

The atonement of Calvary vindicated the law of God as holy, just, and true, not only before the fallen world, but before heaven and before worlds unfallen.--*Signs of the Times*, June 20, 1895.

Phase 2

The law of God cannot be made void by the law of a nation. When the law is trampled in the dust, the sacredness of the commandments of God will be vindicated by those who are loyal to Him (*Manuscript Releases*, Vol. 12, p. 141).

Phase 3

"When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left."

Christ would have all understand the events of his second appearing. The judgment scene will take place in the presence of all the worlds; for in this judgment the government of God will be vindicated, and his law will stand forth as "holy, and just, and good." (*Review and Herald*, September 20, 1898)

Whatever may be the final outcome of the great controversy in terms of the destiny of mankind, it is certain that our future cannot be brighter than God's. Ultimately, He is the important Figure in

the controversy. While it is true that Satan has accused, attacked and sought to destroy mankind, in the final analysis, we are only “pawns” in the big scheme of things. God is the real focus of the devil’s attack. He is the One that Satan really wanted to destroy. He was a murderer “from the beginning” (John 8:44). And the object of his murderous desires was revealed when God in the person of Christ, took on flesh, became mortal, and the devil sought to destroy Him.

Since the character of God is the important subject of the great controversy, and God is the important “Suspect” on trial in the judgment, God is the One who must ultimately be acquitted, justified and vindicated. Thus we see God vindicated at Calvary, God vindicated in the lives of the saints, and God vindicated in the final phase of the atonement.

The sanctuary service reveals the movement of sin, from its inception in man to its final resting place, on the head of the scapegoat. In the interim, it lay before the veil of the most holy place of the sanctuary, God’s “door”. As long as the sin lies at God’s door, His integrity is in question. He has willingly assumed the blame, taken the condemnation and suffered the penalty. Yet His name must be cleared. When the High Priest cleansed the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement, he symbolically gathered all of the sins which had been deposited in the sanctuary and brought them forth from the sanctuary. This is critical to our understanding of the final phase of the plan of redemption. Our Great High Priest dons His kingly robes and comes forth from the sanctuary, bearing the sins of His people. At this point the saints will have been acquitted. God will have been acquitted. But we know that a crime has been committed and the case cannot be closed until the guilty party has been identified, arrested, prosecuted, condemned, and punished. As Jesus comes forth from the heavenly sanctuary, He has not yet confronted Satan. Therefore, the onus is still on Him. He must not be left “holding the bag”. The guilty party must be clearly revealed before the watching universe. A final resting place for sin must be found. It must not be left with God.

The intercession of Christ in man's behalf in the sanctuary above is as essential to the plan of salvation as was His death upon the cross. By His death He began that work which after His resurrection He ascended to complete in heaven (Great Controversy, p. 489).

The work which Christ began on earth is not complete until there is a work done in heaven. And likewise, the work which He has begun in heaven will not be complete until He returns to the “outer court” to do a work on earth, to banish the scapegoat into the wilderness. Here we can clearly see the interconnection between each phase of atonement. Therefore, the third phase of the Atonement is just as essential to the plan of redemption as the other two phases. The ultimate objective of all three phases of each metaphorical model is the vindication of God. If there is no third phase of the vindication of God, as indicated in each metaphorical model, including justification, then God will be the One left “holding the bag”. The process which Christ has begun, will not be complete until He shall have “laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;” (Rev. 20:2). The banishing of the scapegoat is the end of the sanctuary service and the conclusion of the atonement. This final step in the process is absolutely essential. If ultimately God is left “holding the bag”, in the person of Jesus Christ, the saints will never be able to ascend to the “sea of glass” and sing “Great and marvelous *are* Your works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true *are* Your ways, O King of saints!”

(Rev. 15:3). But when the real culprit is finally “fingered”, banished, and ultimately destroyed, the end of all controversy shall have come. God will be fully vindicated and then and only then will the universe be eternally safe. Our future cannot be brighter than God’s. His vindication is essential to the peace and security of universe. Therefore, we conclude that there must be three phases to each of the metaphors of salvations which is consistent with three phases of atonement.

Appendix A

Daniel chapter eight outlines the time period leading up to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

Daniel 8:13-14 Then I heard a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, "How long *will* the vision *be*, *concerning* the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled under foot?" ¹⁴ And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

Daniel 8:15-16 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me one having the appearance of a man. ¹⁶ And I heard a man's voice between *the banks of* the Ulai, who called, and said, "Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision."

Although the angel Gabriel was sent to give Daniel understanding of the vision concerning the cleansing of the sanctuary, he was prevented from doing so doing at this time because Daniel was overwhelmed.

Daniel 8:27 And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

At a later date, as Daniel studied and prayed about the matter, Gabriel returned to fulfill his commission to give Daniel understanding of the vision concerning the 2300 days leading to the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary.

Daniel 9:21-22 yes, while I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. ²² And he informed *me*, and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand.

Daniel had been given a time period leading up to the cleansing of the sanctuary but the prophecy was of little use since Daniel was not given an explanation as to when the 2300 days would begin. Thus Gabriel begins his explanation of the vision by providing the starting point.

Daniel 9:25-26 "Know therefore and understand, *That* from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, *There shall be* seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. ²⁶ "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it *shall be* with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.

This prophecy provides the time for the beginning of the cleansing of the anti-typical sanctuary. Correlating the commandment of Artaxerxes to rebuild Jerusalem, provided in Ezra chapter six, we know that the second phase of the atonement in the sanctuary began in the heavenly sanctuary in the year 1844.

Appendix B

Are There Two Phases?

The Bible teaches two phases of justification. They have been referred to by some proponents of the 1888 message as legal justification and justification by faith. These are two phases of one justification. The second phase is a response to the realization and acceptance of the first phase. The first phase, legal justification, is corporate and universal. It applies to all men. At the cross the whole human race was legally justified. Some texts which present this aspect of justification include Romans 3:23 - 24, 4:5, 4:25, 5:1, 5:9 and 5:18. While legal justification is universal, justification by faith is individual. It occurs as a result of our personal acceptance of the facts of the gospel. Texts which present justification by faith include Gal. 2:16, Romans 4:3, 4:5, 4:9-11.

The same truth may be understood from the Biblical term "forgiveness". The Bible teaches two aspects of forgiveness. At the cross the whole human race was granted a judicial pardon. However, there is also an experiential aspect of forgiveness. David understood both aspects. After his sin, involving Bathsheba and Uriah, he confessed his sin and sought forgiveness. Notice his prayer:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions (Psalms 51:1-3).

This is David's plea for forgiveness. "Have mercy . . . blot out my transgressions". However David is not satisfied to simply have the record of his sin

blotted out and not counted against him. This is only the judicial aspect of forgiveness.

David wants both judicial and experiential forgiveness therefore he continues to plead.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. . .
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be
whiter than snow. . . Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a
right spirit within me (Psalms 51:2 - 10).

This is complete forgiveness. It includes having the legal condemnation reversed and having our sins blotted from God's record books. And it also includes having the sin removed from our hearts and lives. Complete forgiveness includes cleansing. It is restoration from the ruin that sin has caused.

The two phases of justification or two aspects of forgiveness can also be seen in the reconciliation analogy used in 2nd Corinthians:

And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:18-20 KJV)

The legal aspect of the reconciliation which was accomplished at the cross is presented first: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them". This phase of the reconciliation corresponds to legal justification. The sins which should have been charged against us were charged against Christ. The condemnation which we deserved is cancelled and our trespasses are not counted against us. The passage then proceeds to highlight the experiential aspect of the process: "We implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:20 NKJV). The first half of the passage says God already reconciled us to God at the cross.

However that is a legal reconciliation. It demonstrates the justice of God and vindicates the mercy of God in treating us as though we had not sinned. As wonderful as that may be, until we respond to what God has done, we still have a "heart problem" which needs to be addressed. Thus the second half of this passage highlights the invitation to respond to what God has done. The response involves an experiential reconciliation, a change of heart and peace with God.

These two phases of justification, which correspond to the two aspects of forgiveness, are clearly supported by the original text of the New Testament. There are two different Greek words translated by the English word "forgive". Colossians chapter two uses one of these Greek words:

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹² Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. ¹³ And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; ¹⁴ Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross (Col 2:11-14, KJV).

As we study the meaning of forgiveness as presented in this passage, it is very important to recognize that the apostle Paul is speaking to the Colossian believers about corporate events, not personal, individual experiences. This is made evident by several expressions used in the passage. First, notice that he says "ye are circumcised". Evidently he is *not* speaking of their individual physical circumcision nor is he speaking of their personal spiritual circumcision. He says "ye are circumcised . . . by the circumcision of Christ". This expression refers to a corporate event. All

believers and unbelievers for that matter were circumcised when Christ was "cut off" in fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy. (See Daniel 9:26) Next Paul speaks of "baptism". But this is not the personal baptism of the believer that is referred to. It is the corporate baptism of the human race. This is made shown when Paul explains how they rose up after being buried in baptism. He says you are "risen with Him". When did they rise? When the pastor raised them from the water? No. They were raised when God raised Christ from the dead. Clearly this is a corporate event. Next the apostle speaks of the "quickening". When were they quickened? They were "quickened together with Him". In other words when Christ was quickened the Colossian believers and all mankind was quickened. Again we see this is a corporate event and not a personal experience being spoken of by the passage. Finally Paul puts all of these events in the context of the "blotting out" of "the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us". When was the "handwriting" "blotted out"? When the Colossians believed the gospel? No. It was a corporate event which took place when Christ nailed "it to His cross".

Thus the details of the passage make it is very clear that Paul is speaking of corporate realities and not personal experiences. He is speaking of events which took place once for all mankind. An examination of the original text strengthens this interpretation. The verbs are in the aorist tense. Thus we conclude that all of these events took place at the cross.

Now that we understand the context we need to consider another wonderful event connected with the events of this passage. In verse thirteen we read:

¹³And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses (Colossians 2:13).

Here the Bible clearly says that God has "forgiven" them "all trespasses". When did the forgiveness occur? It occurred before they were "quickened together with Him". When Christ was quickened (at the resurrection) the sins were all already "forgiven". The term forgiven is in the aorist tense. It happened before the quickening. To whom does the forgiveness apply? Paul spoke of this matter to the Colossian believers. And it does apply to them. But the important question is does it only apply to them? We ask again. When did this forgiveness take place? The timing is the key to understanding to whom it applies. The statement is right in the midst of a passage which has been shown to be speaking of corporate realities. Generally speaking corporate realities apply to the whole human race. In this particular passage the evidence supports a universal application. When God blotted out the "handwriting", He did not merely blot it out for Colossians or even all believers in Christ. He blotted it out for all mankind. To argue otherwise would necessarily involve a unacceptable form of limited atonement. Therefore when He granted the forgiveness of sins, at the cross, it was not merely the sins of believers which were forgiven. This was a corporate event, effective for all mankind. Thus the passage clearly teaches the forgiveness of all sins (except the unpardonable sin) for all sinners, believers and unbelievers alike. The question is how does this truth about forgiveness relate to 1 John 1:9?

The Greek word in Colossians 2:13 which is translated "forgiven" is the word *charizomai*. But the word translated "forgive" in 1 John 1:9 is an entirely different

word. It is the word "aphiemi". The word charizomai comes from the word charis which means grace. *The Complete Word Study Dictionary* provides this insight into the meaning of charizomai. "The most common meaning peculiar to the New Testament is to pardon, to graciously remit a person's sin" (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, pg. 1468, Spiros Zodhiates Th. D.) But the word translated "forgive" in 1 John 1:9 (aphiemi) does not mean "pardon". It comes from two root words "apo" and "hiemi". Apo means "from" and hiemi means "send forth" or "send away". Thus aphiemi has the meaning of sending forth from or sending away from. It carries the idea of two entities being separated. Aphiemi is the term used in Matthew 13:36. "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house". The word "sent" is aphiemi. Another example is found in 1 Corinthians 7:11 where Paul says "let not the husband put away his wife". The words "put away" are translated from aphiemi. With this background we can see that what 1 John 1:9 actually says is "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to "put away" or "separate us from" our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness".

Thus we see that the original language of the New Testament clearly supports two aspects of forgiveness corresponding to the two phases of justification.