

From Sin to Righteousness



Identification (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Our theme through this week has been Identification, and I'll be continuing with that today. I don't know of any theme better suited to the Easter season or more helpful in enabling to enter personally into all that was obtained for us through the death of Jesus.

In my last three talks I've been unfolding for you various aspects of the marvelous prophetic preview of the sufferings of Jesus contained in chapter 53 of the prophet Isaiah. I've spoken about how Jesus became identified with the human race as the Son of Man, the last Adam, how the Lord visited upon him, the rebellion of the whole Adamic race. Not only the rebellion but the evil consequences of rebellion, how the Lord made it meet altogether upon Jesus as he hung there on the cross. And then yesterday I spoke about one particular aspect of the exchange that was accomplished there, how Jesus was punished for our sins that we might have forgiveness, how God's justice was satisfied perfectly by the death of Jesus as our representative, bearing the responsibility for our sins, that in turn without compromising his justice, God might offer to us forgiveness.

Today I'm going to focus on yet another aspect of this wonderful exchange accomplished by the death of Jesus. It's one that is related to yesterdays and yet it's significantly different. I'm going to read now verse 10 of Isaiah, chapter 53 which contains this particular aspect of the exchange I'm talking about today:

> "Yet is was the Lord's will to crush him [Jesus] and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life [or his soul] a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand." (NIV)

So the Lord made the soul of Jesus on the cross a guilt offering. Now the word in Hebrew that's translated guilt offering means both guilt and guilt offering. It's one and the same word. To understand that we have to look at the picture of how sin offerings and guilt offerings were carried out under the Mosaic Law. The person who was guilty, who had something that he had to expiate before God, would bring his

offering, might be a sheep, might be a goat, might be a bullock, and he would acknowledge the sin or the guilt that he had. And the priest, as his representative and acting on behalf of God at the same time, would lay his hand upon the head of the offering, the animal (sheep, goat, or bullock) and then as the man truly repented and confessed his sin to the priest, by that act of the hands laid on the head of the sacrificial offering, symbolically, the man's guilt was transferred to the animal. And then the animal was slain, paying the penalty for the man's guilt and thus the man could receive pardon and forgiveness. However course that was only symbolical. It was a preview of what was actually accomplished by the death of Jesus on the cross. So on the cross, Jesus became the sin offering, the guilt offering. In a certain sense, Almighty God laid his hand on the head of Jesus, transferred to him our guilt and our sin. And then Jesus died, he poured out soul unto death.

Again in the Old Testament, Leviticus 17:11 says, "the soul of all flesh is in the blood." So as Jesus poured out his blood, drop by drop on the cross, until he'd emptied out the blood out of his body, he had poured out his soul, his total life, as the guilt offering, the substitute, the one who bore the guilt of entire human race.

I'm deeply impressed and touched by the phrase with which that verse opens, "yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer." I've pondered on that word crush. I've meditated on it and I've thought to myself, of course Jesus suffered terribly, physically, but I believe that crushing was not so much physical as spiritual. I believe that fearful burden of the guilt of all humanity as by the Father's hand it was laid upon the Son on the cross. I believe it was crushing. I believe it was more than even Jesus could endure. I believe it crushed the very life out of him. And it says it was the Lord's will to crush him. That's an astonishing statement because how could God take pleasure in that awful scene of suffering. And yet it was so. It was the Lord's will because that was the only way through that divinely ordained exchange by which Jesus became the guilt offering. Only in that way could peace and pardon and righteousness be made available to us. And significantly there in that 53rd chapter of Isaiah there is no relieving of the darkness, the awful darkness that permeates that chapter up till the 10th verse. But where it speaks about the Lord making his soul a guilt offering, then the darkness breaks and light comes.

And the next words are, "he will see his offspring, and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand." So once that has happened then the way is open for the light to break forth, eternal light, reconciliation, peace and healing but only when this sin offering had been fully consummated could that take place.

This is referred to by the apostle Paul in the New Testament in 2 Corinthians 5:21, but many Christians don't understand that because they don't realize that the same word means guilt and guilt offering or sin and sin offering. What Paul says referring to the death of Jesus in 2 Corinthians 5:21 is this:

> "God made him [Jesus] who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (NIV)

He's actually quoting Isaiah 53:10. Most people don't perceive that because the word used in Isaiah is a guilt offering or a sin offering. But bear in mind it's one in the same word. The sin offering was the sin, the sin was the offering the offering was the sin, they were identical. So Jesus was made the sin offering, he was made sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Note the exchange, Jesus became sin that we might have his righteousness.

Against this background of Jesus as the sin offering on the cross. I want to look with you briefly at two other passages in Isaiah. The first is Isaiah 64 verse 6 and it speaks of the futility of self righteousness:

> "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away." (NIV)

Notice this true of the entire human race. In Isaiah 53 it says, "we have all gone astray like sheep." Here it say we have all become one who is unclean and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags. The best we can do in our own righteousness is nothing but a filthy rag in God's sight, it is totally vain to come to God with our own righteousness. But God has made provision through the death of Jesus that we may receive his righteousness.

Compare this other passage in Isaiah chapter, 61 verse 10:

> "I will rejoice greatly in the Lord. My soul will exult in my God; For He [the Lord] has clothed me with garments of salvation, he has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." (NIV)

Here is an expression of intense, tremendous joy. I will rejoice greatly my soul will exalt. What's the reason? The reason is

the outcome of this exchange. For God has clothed me with garments of salvation, he saved me from the consequences of my own sin. But not just that, after salvation there comes righteousness. He has wrapped me with a robe of righteousness. What a beautiful expression. That righteousness is not our own righteousness. It's the righteousness of God, it's the righteousness that's made available to us through that substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus. And God doesn't just put that robe of righteousness on us. The language there is so beautiful, he wraps us with the robe of righteousness. He covers us totally. Every area of our old sinful, carnal nature, every mistake, every transgression, every sin is totally covered under that all embracing robe of the righteousness of Jesus. We need to bear this in mind that salvation in itself is not all.

Or put it in another way, there's many different aspects to salvation. It's not just that we get "saved" that our sins are forgiven and it ends there. But when we have salvation, then we have the robe of righteousness. We don't any longer come to God in our own righteousness. We're not concerned about trying to do the best that we can. There's something much higher than that. There's the righteousness of God made available to us through faith in Jesus. He wraps us around with his own righteousness. We never have to feel sinful or ashamed or apologetic any longer.

And it's also so beautifully summed up in that one verse in Romans chapter 8, verse 1, one of my favorite verses:

> "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." (NIV)

No condemnation, there's nothing held against us. We're not guilty on any charge, we're acquitted on all accounts. We don't appear before God trying to o our best or brushing up our own righteousness, but we're wrapped around with the robe of God's righteousness in Jesus.

Well our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again next week at this same time, Monday through Friday. I look forward to exploring with you yet more of the unsearchable riches made available to us through the death of Jesus.

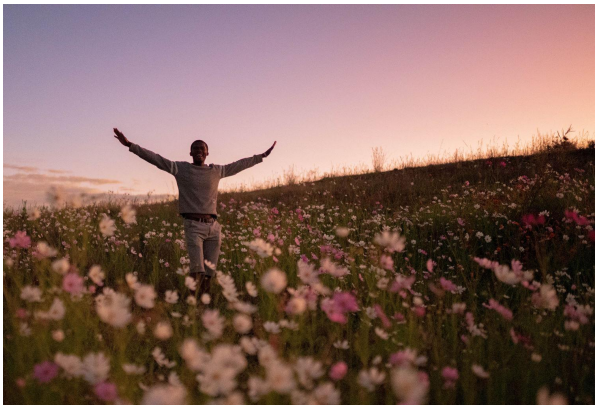
My special offer this week is my book Three Messages for Israel. Each of the three messages in the book focuses on the person and work of the Messiah. The first message is a detailed, verse-by-verse analysis of Isaiah's prophetic picture of Messiah's atoning sacrifice. Each message will give you new insight and strengthen your faith.

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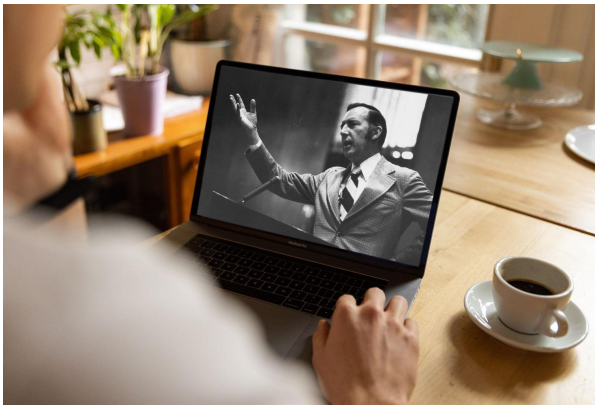
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