

Sermon

A Divinely Ordained Exchange



Atonement
by Derek Prince

Hebrews 10:14, are you there?

> "For by one sacrifice he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

Thank you. I've been emphasizing two things. First of all, that the death of Jesus on the cross was a sacrifice. A sacrifice ordained by God in which Jesus as priest offered Himself as sacrifice on behalf of the whole human race to God the Father. Secondly I've been emphasizing that it was, and I like to say is, a perfect sacrifice. Nothing was omitted, nothing will ever have to be added; it is perfectly perfect, completely complete. Every need of every descendant of Adam has been totally provided for through that one sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. It's very important to grasp that and it's important that we do not let our attention wander from that sacrifice. We can get involved in so many forms of teaching and doctrine and Christian activity which may all be good in their way, but if they're separated from the sacrifice of the cross they ultimately lose their power to help.

I want now to take a little picture from the prophet Isaiah that illustrates one more point. That the cross is the center of all God's provision. The whole gospel centers around the cross. The prophet Isaiah happens to illustrate this in a very vivid way. How many chapters? 66. How many books in the Bible? 66. Also there's a major division in Isaiah, although I don't believe it means there are two prophets. At the end of chapter 39 there's a change. How many books are there in the Old Testament? 39. And the next 27 chapters of Isaiah have often been called the gospel in the Old Testament. How many books are there in the New Testament? 27. All right. So we're going to focus on that number 27, which is the chapters of Isaiah from 40 through 66. In case you have some trouble, as I do, you subtract 40 from 66 you only get 26. But you have to bear in mind you're including both the beginning and the ending so it becomes 27 chapters.

These 27 chapters are in turn divided into three sets of nine chapters. And this is how they are divided. The first one is 40 through 48. The second one is 49 through 57. The third one is 58 through 66. Now there's one feature of those three sets of nine that's interesting. Each one ends with an emphatic declaration that God will never compromise with

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sin. Somebody find and read out for us the last verse of Isaiah 48. When you've found it, just stand up so that I know. The last verse of Isaiah 48. Come on.

> "There is no peace for the wicked, says the Lord."

That's right. Did you hear that? There is no peace for the wicked. Somebody else find the last verse of 57. Yes?

> "There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked."

That's right. Almost identical. There is no peace, says my God, for the wicked. Now somebody find the last verse of 66. Stand up and read it. Don't be shy. Come on, now. You people are going to have to be taught to overcome embarrassment. The last verse of 66.

> "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

That's right. It's not the same words but the same statement that those who have transgressed and not repented will be an eternal spectacle of God's judgment. So each of those three sections of nine chapters ends with a declaration that in spite of all His mercy God will never compromise with sin that has not been repented of.

Now, the middle section is 49 through 57. And if you want to find the middle chapter, it's 49, 50, 51, 52—that's four—it's the next one which is 53. It's the middle chapter of the middle section. See what I'm saying? All right. Now, if you look at 53 it really begins at the end of 52. If you're looking in your Bibles, 52, verse 13:

> "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently..."

The word behold introduces my servant. That is the title that's given to Jesus in this prophecy. So if you include the last three verses of chapter 52, you get five sets of three verses because chapter 53 is twelve verses, four sets of three. You need to probably look at your Bibles in order to see that.

So now we're going to sort out these sets of three verses. 52:13–15. Two, 53:1–3. Three, 53:4–6. Four, 53:7–9. And the last one is 53:10–12. So we're dealing with the middle set of three chapters each, three sets of nine chapters. We're dealing with the middle chapter which is chapter 53. And when we split it up and take the introduction we've got five successive sets of three verses. What's the middle set? 53:4–6. So can you see that 53:4–6 is the middle of the middle of the middle. I do think this is by divine appointment because it is the absolute center and heart of the total message of the gospel.

Let's consider what it says. I'm going to read those three verses. I'm going to change some of the words. One of the tragedies of the English translation of the Bible is that in this passage the translators of the King James Version, which I consider to be a wonderful version, spiritualize the meaning of words that are totally physical in their meaning. And they used griefs and sorrows where the Bible says sicknesses and pains. And those words in Hebrew for sickness and pain have had an unchanged meaning from the time of Moses to the present day. They're still the same words.

Those of you with a European background, at least in Luther's translation in German, he uses kronkite and shmeltz, which are the two standard words for sickness and pain. Likewise, I think, most of the Scandinavian versions use words with a physical meaning.

So I'm going to put in the physical meaning. Also, if you look at the beginning of verse 4 it says "surely he." The effect of that is to put all the emphasis on the he for two reasons. First of all, the word that's translated surely emphasizes the word that follows. Then again, Hebrew, like Latin and Greek and Russian and other languages, but not most European languages, does not need to put the pronoun in he because it's there in the form of the verb. Do you understand what I'm saying? So you put the pronoun in only if you want to emphasize it. And the pronoun is put in here so the he is emphasized twice. Once by the word that goes before it, surely, and then by the fact that the pronoun is put in. Surely he. So all the emphasis is on this wonderful person and what he has done.

> "Surely he has borne our sicknesses, and carried our pain: yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement for our peace was upon him; and by his stripes [or wounds] we are healed."

Now we come to the crucial verse.

> "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all."

There's the Bible's diagnosis. What is the problem of the human race? What have we done, all of us? We've not all committed adultery, got drunk or stolen. There's one thing each one of us has done, we've turned to our own way which is not God's way, and God describes that as iniquity. I think the best modern translation would be rebellion. That is the root problem of humanity, is rebellion against God. And it's universal. All of us, there's not one exception. Jew or Gentile, Catholic or Protestant, Asian or American or African; it makes no difference. We are all in the same category, we are rebels. We have turned our backs on God and gone our own way. But the marvelous message is that God has laid on Jesus the iniquity, the rebellion, of us all. One translation says God made meet together on him the iniquity of us all. All men of all races, all ages. The iniquity, the rebellion came upon Jesus as He hung upon the cross.

The word for iniquity in Hebrew is avon. And it's important to know what it means. What I want to point out is it not merely means rebellion but it means all the evil consequences of rebellion. The punishment of rebellion and all that rebellion brings on those who are guilty. I'll give you three passages from different parts of the Old Testament to show you this. First of all, in Genesis 4:13. This is Cain after he'd heard God's sentence on the murder of his brother.

> "And Cain said to the Lord, 'My punishment is greater than I can bear...'"

But the word is avon. My iniquity and the punishment of it, you understand? It's all in one. It's greater than I can bear.

And then in 1 Samuel 28:10. Saul is talking to the witch of Endor and is saying bring up Samuel for me and I promise you you won't be punished. The punishment for witchcraft was death. And he said to the witch:

> "And Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying, 'As the Lord lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing...'"

But the Hebrew word is avon. You will not be held guilty for it and the punishment will not come upon you.

And then in Lamentation. How many of you know where to find Lamentation? It's that little book at the end of the prophet Jeremiah. I'm doing this if I can convince you that what I'm saying is direct application of the Bible. It's not some fancy interpretation. In Lamentation 4 we have this word twice. In verse 6:

> "The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people..."

Well, you've got two words there. The punishment of the iniquity. But the Hebrew word is all one, avon. Do you understand? It's iniquity and the punishment of iniquity.

And in verse 22 of the same chapter:

> "The punishment of your iniquity is accomplished."

But there's only one word in Hebrew, it's avon. So this word means rebellion and the punishment for rebellion and all the evil consequences of rebellion.

Now, when you turn back to Isaiah 53, the Lord laid upon him the rebellion of us all, the punishment of our rebellion and all the evil consequences of rebellion. And so, the sacrifice of the cross is an exchange. Now here is a key to unlock the treasures of God's provision. I'm putting it in your hand. At the cross an exchange took place, divinely ordained and predicted by God. Very simple. All the evil due by justice to us came upon Jesus that all the good due to Jesus might be made available to us. I'm going to say that again because it's crucial. All the evil due by justice to us came upon Jesus that all the good due to Jesus had earned by His sinless obedience might be made available to us. I'm going to say it more shortly. And when I'm teaching in large meetings I use two hands. The left hand for the evil, the right hand for the good. It will help you to activate if you'll do that. I'll do it first. "All the evil came upon Jesus that all the good might be made available to us." Can you do that now? "All the evil came upon Jesus that all the good might be made available to us."

Now there's no reason for that. You can never find any reason. God decided. The key word there is grace. You've heard the word grace. Grace is something you cannot earn, you can never deserve. Most religious people don't enjoy God's grace because they're trying to earn it. There is no way to earn what God did for you through the death of Jesus on the cross. There's only one way to receive it, that is believe it. Stop trying to earn it. Stop trying to persuade yourself you're almost good enough. You aren't. You never

will be. The only way you can receive the provision of Jesus on the cross is by faith.

Why did God do it? Because He loved us. Why did God love us? Eternity will be too short to find out. And the Bible never offers an explanation of why God loves us. It's unexplainable. You may think differently but it's unexplainable. We didn't deserve it, we didn't earn it, there was nothing in us; it was a sovereign choice of Almighty God.

Let's look at the picture that this gives us. I want you to turn to 1 Corinthians 15:45 and 47. We get here two titles of Jesus. Verse 45 says:

> "So it is written, the first man Adam became a living being [or a living soul]; the last Adam became a life giving Spirit."

What's the title of Jesus in that verse? The last Adam. A lot of people say the second Adam. That's wrong.

Then we go down to verse 47:

> "The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second man is the Lord from heaven."

What's the title of Jesus there? The second man. I think I need to write those up. First of all, the last Adam. Secondly, the second man. Now you've got to get those right and you've got to get them in the right order. Otherwise it doesn't make sense. On the cross Jesus was the last Adam. On Him came the whole evil inheritance of the whole Adamic race. He wasn't the last in the sense of time—there have been millions and millions of descendants of Adam born since then—but He was last in the sense that the total evil inheritance of our sin cursed race came upon Him. And when He was buried, it was buried. It was put away. It was finished. It was put out of sight. And then when He rose from the dead He arose as the second man, a new kind of man. The Emmanuel race, the God/man race. And everyone who is born again through faith in His death and His resurrection becomes part of this new race, the Emmanuel race. I want to get that very clear to you. Picture Him on the cross, the last Adam, the end of it all. There was no other way for our race ever to escape from the evil consequences of what we'd done. He was buried and it was buried. And when He rose the third day He was the beginning of a new race, the God/man race. A race in which God and man are somehow mysteriously combined in one new creation. He was the firstborn of the dead, the head of the church.

Paul compares His resurrection to a birth, a birth from the dead. And he calls Him the head of the church. That's a beautiful picture because in a natural human birth, normally what part of the body emerges first? The head. And when the head emerges it's the guarantee the body is going to follow. And when Jesus as head was resurrected from the dead the head of the church, He's the guarantee of our resurrection. He died as the last Adam, He rose as the second man.

I think I'd like you to say that. "He died as the last Adam—use your left hand—He died as the last Adam. He rose as the second man."

Now, we just want to look at one final prophetic picture in Isaiah. Isaiah 1. This is a description of Israel's rebellion. In verse 2 the Lord says about the sons of Israel:

> "They have rebelled against me..."

And then in verses 5 and 6 he comes to the theme that they persist in rebelling.

> "Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt [that is rebel] more and more."

And now here's a picture of rebellion.

> "The whole head is sick and the whole heart faints. From the soul of the foot even to the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores: they have not been closed or bound up or anointed with ointment."

That's rebellion and all its evil consequences. But listen, it's also a perfect picture of Jesus on the cross. That's exactly how He was. Turn to Isaiah 52, the introduction that we looked at. Isaiah 52:13–14. And I want somebody who has the NIV to be ready to give us the NIV translation in a minute.

> "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. Just as many were astonished at you; so his visage was marred more than any

> man, and his form more than the sons of men."

His physical form was so marred that He lost the appearance of a human being. From the crown of the head to the soles of the foot it was nothing but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. Could you give me, somebody, the NIV reading for verse 14?

> "See, my servant will act wisely, he will be raised and lifted up, and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him; his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man, and his form marred beyond human likeness."

Thank you. Do you see that? His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness. Why? It had to be because that's the outworking of rebellion. And in that vivid picture God conveys to us this fact that on the cross Jesus bore our rebellion and all its evil consequences. I want you to say that and we'll close. "On the cross Jesus bore our rebellion and all its evil consequences."

Now if you really believe that you have to say one more thing. "Thank you, Lord." Amen.

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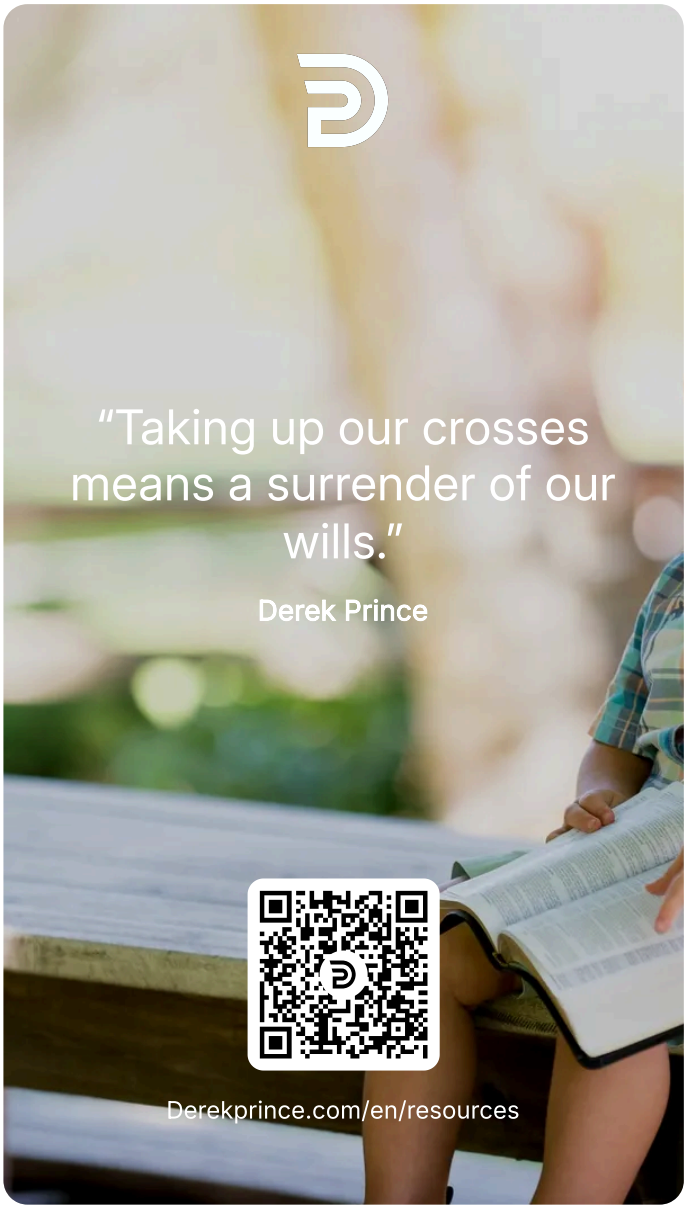

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