

Introduction: The plan of God for Jesus to be born and be our atonement was always His plan. God puts wicked men in place to accomplish His will. We saw this in Daniel 1, in the life of Herod. Now we are going to look at the reality of His birth and the purpose of His birth and life to be the atoning sacrifice for our sin.

1. The literal, virgin birth of Christ as prophesied, cf. Luke 2:6-7
2. Rejoicing in the prophesied plan, cf. Luke 2:8-14
  - 2.1. Why we rejoice is because this plan is being fulfilled, a savior is born
  - 2.2. Rejoicing because men were looking for the savior, cf. Luke 2:21-35
3. The purpose and fulfilling of the birth of Jesus, cf. Luke 2:41-52

Point three leads us into the huge dynamic of Christ being fully God and fully man.

Hebrews 4:15 *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."* I want to explore many passages of Scripture that affirm this glorious fact of the fully God, fully man principal.

This is a great discussion of R.C. Sproul as he quotes the complexing issues of this, *"Truly Jesus is the God-man, but the relationship between the two is not that easy to figure out. The resurrection did not make the situation any simpler. After conquering death, Mary could worship Him and hold onto His feet. His new body still had nail marks that Thomas could see and touch. Jesus could cook a fish breakfast for His depressed fishing disciples. But He could also walk through locked doors, and after talking to some disciples, He could suddenly vanish. At the end of His time on earth, after being seen (He was no apparition) by many, He ascended bodily to heaven and is now seated at the Father's right hand."* But today, as well as the early church, we cry out "Jesus is Lord, Jesus is God."

Adam's transgression *"In his rebellion, he plunged himself, as well as us, into the morass of sin, guilt, and condemnation. Although Adam broke the covenant of works, its inexorable demands and inflexible penalty remain in force. Jesus Christ would come as the second Adam to accomplish what the first Adam did not: to obey perfectly and to pay the penalty for the sins of His people."*

Charles Spurgeon says, *"God's eternal purpose to save us in this manner, and it was worked out in an eternal transaction between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in prospect of the incarnation of the Son. This transaction established the terms and conditions that Christ would accomplish in purchasing the salvation of His people."*

1. Christ's work is that of a substitutionary sacrifice. John 1:29 *"The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"* Revelation 5:9 *"And they sang a new song, saying, Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*
2. This terminology points to the Old Testament sacrificial system. The Old Testament sacrifices served as types of the atoning work of Christ. The two key components of the sacrificial system were representation and imputation.
  - 2.1. The idea of representation is illustrated in the Day of Atonement. Leviticus 16:11 *"Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself, and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself."* Leviticus 16:15 *"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat."* In these transactions the priest and the people confessed that it was they who deserved to die; the animals were slain in their place.
  - 2.2. The idea of imputation is illustrated in Leviticus 16:20-22. In this act the sins of the people were imputed to the goat. It was led into the wilderness to depict that the guilt of the sins of the people had been removed from them *"as far as the east is from the west"*.
  - 2.3. The blood of bulls and goats could not atone for man's sin. R.C. Sproul quotes, *"It was for this reason the Son of God became a man. Jesus Christ, being a man, is the suitable substitute. Moreover, He is also the only sufficient substitute. For the death of a mere man could not satisfy an eternal, infinite guilt. Thus, being the God-man, He made infinite and eternal satisfaction."*
  - 2.4. As the Savior, Christ was appointed by the Father to be the vicarious sacrifice of His people. He took our place; He was our representative. Moreover, God imputed the guilt of our sin to the Lord Jesus Christ. He became guilty in our place.
3. Some additional thoughts on atonement
  - 3.1. Propitiation, to propitiate someone is to remove his anger by satisfying justice. 1 John 4:10 *"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*
  - 3.2. Reconciliation, the sinner is alienated from God, Isaiah 59:2 *"but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."* Reconciliation is God's provision for the removal of that alienation and the reestablishment of peace, friendship, and fellowship, cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19.
  - 3.3. Redemption, or ransom. Redemption views the atonement from the perspective of a payment made to God. The idea of redemption is to salvage, or deliver, by payment. Matthew 20:28 *"Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

In conclusion the reality of the birth of Christ to be our redeemer was rooted in the OT. There were two ideas attached to redemption in the OT.

- A man was held liable if he carelessly let his ox get out and kill someone. He could be released from guilt and death by paying a ransom.
- Inheritance, a kinsman-redeemer could pay off a family debt, restore the land, and provide an heir (for example, what Boaz did for Ruth). In Galatians, Paul applies redemption to our adoption: "In order that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:5-7). Adam not only plunged us into the morass of guilt and corruption, he lost also the family farm. He blew our inheritance as the sons of God. Christ paid off the debt of our sin so that God could restore the right and privileges of adoption.