

SOME THOUGHTS ON

ATONEMENT, FORGIVENESS AND REDEMPTION

Wyn Laidig, 2012
TheSabbathGathering.org

OVERVIEW

Forgiveness, atonement, and redemption are fundamentally different concepts. However, as the Scriptures listed below will show, there is a connection between all three of these concepts when it comes to how God deals with sin.

“Forgive” or “forgiveness” is usually translated from the Hebrew **salah** “*release, pardon, remove guilt associated with sin or wrongdoing associated with ritual or vows*”. Another word sometimes translated “forgive” is the Hebrew **nasa’** which literally means “to lift up, carry away”. The goal of forgiveness is to **restore the broken relationship**. If your neighbor throws a stone through your window, you may say to him, “Look, you replace the window and I will forgive you.” Forgiveness doesn’t fix the window; forgiveness does restore the relationship. Fixing the window was a necessary step to allow forgiveness to take place. This is similar to the arrangement God has with his people. Sin is breaking God’s commands of Torah, which results in a broken relationship with Him. Forgiveness restores that broken relationship. But to receive forgiveness there must be a sacrifice which “atones” for the sin.

“Atonement” or “atone” is from the Hebrew **kofer** “*to cover*”. When atonement is made for sin, a person’s sins are “*covered*”. The blood sacrifices of the sin offerings and guilt offerings allowed a person’s sins to be covered before God. These sacrifices had to be done continually, until the Messiah’s sacrifice covered sins for all time, once and for all.

It is interesting that the same Hebrew word **kofer** can also mean “*ransom or payment*”, thus referring to the item used to make atonement. This meaning of atonement as ransom or payment is one of the ways that connects the concept of atonement with that of redemption.

“Redeem” or “redemption” is usually translated from the Hebrew **padah** meaning “*ransom, buy, release; to cause the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership, often implying a delivering or rescue of a person in distress*” or from the Hebrew **ga’al** meaning “*to deliver, save, avenge, buy back; to remove an object from a dangerous situation as an extension of being redeemed from indenture or slavery*”.

Thus, “Redemption” can be used in wide variety of life circumstances. A person could redeem a firstborn donkey by offering a lamb (Ex 13:13) or redeem their firstborn son with a payment of 5 shekels (Num 18:15-16). We also see that God “redeemed” his people from slavery (Dt 24:18), and in times of famine He has redeemed them from death (Job 5:20). And we read that He redeems His people from the ruthless (Jer 15:21). But these are all redemptions of a temporary, physical nature. When we speak of redemption for our sins, or about the Messiah as our Redeemer, we are usually talking about eternal redemption; that is, eternal deliverance or rescue from the eternal death that would be a consequence of the sin that separates us from a right relationship with God.

All three concepts (atonement, forgiveness, and redemption) are fundamentally separate concepts, and can each be used to describe to a multitude of different situations. However, it is when we look at the eternal aspects of forgiveness, atonement, and redemption in relationship to sin that we find Scripture shows there is a connection or relationship between these concepts.

ATONEMENT AND FORGIVENESS

Atonement and forgiveness, as discussed above, are in general two different concepts. However when it comes to God’s plan for forgiveness, we see there is a close connection. There are numerous examples in Scripture showing that **when atonement is made, forgiveness is given**. It should be emphasized that this is different from saying that forgiveness was purchased, earned or deserved. No one can earn or purchase a right relationship with God. And it is never deserved, no matter how hard man may try. The eternal

consequence of unforgiven sin is death. But God, because of His grace, offers His people something they don't deserve, and can never earn. He offers them a path to forgiveness - a path back to a right relationship with Him. That path requires atonement, usually in the form of a blood sacrifice. This is seen in many passages of Leviticus:

Leviticus 4:20

Thus shall he do with the bull. As he did with the bull of the sin offering, so shall he do with this. And **the priest shall make atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven.**

Leviticus 4:26

And all its fat he shall burn on the altar, like the fat of the sacrifice of peace offerings. So **the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin, and he shall be forgiven.**

Leviticus 4:31

And all its fat he shall remove, as the fat is removed from the peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a pleasing aroma to the LORD. **And the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.**

Leviticus 4:35

And all its fat he shall remove as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of peace offerings, and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on top of the LORD's food offerings. **And the priest shall make atonement for him for the sin which he has committed, and he shall be forgiven.**

Leviticus 5:16

He shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing and shall add a fifth to it and give it to the priest. **And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven.**

See also Lev 5:6, Lev 5:10, Lev 5:13, Lev 5:18, Lev 6:7, Lev 19:22, and Num 15:25-28 for similar examples showing that atonement was a necessary step for forgiveness.

The Psalms also connect forgiveness with the concept of covering or atonement. The Psalms, as poetic passages, make frequent use of "dualisms" – pairs of phrases that state the same concept using different words. The following examples show "transgression forgiven" and "sin covered" as parallel phrases with similar meaning:

Psalm 32:1

Blessed is the one whose **transgression is forgiven**, whose **sin is covered**.

Psalm 85:2

You **forgave the iniquity** of your people; you **covered all their sin**.

Atonement for sin, or the covering of sin, was accomplished through blood sacrifice that was a foreshadowing of the atonement through the death of the Yeshua. The sin and guilt offerings were symbolic shadowings of the perfect sacrifice of the sinless (unblemished) Lamb of God.

REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS

We have seen that many passages show that forgiveness is a result of atonement. However, other passages show that forgiveness follows repentance. "Repentance" is from the Hebrew **shuv** and means "*to turn back, or turn around*". It signifies the "*turning away*" from one's current ungodly path, and the subsequent "*turning toward*" God's path and following His commands. Scripture links this repentance to forgiveness. For example:

Jeremiah 36:3

It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the disaster that I intend to do to them, so **that everyone may turn from his evil way, and that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.**"

The implication is that if they do not turn from their evil way, they will not be forgiven. Similarly in Chronicles we read:

2 Chronicles 7:14

if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and **turn from their wicked ways**, then I will hear from heaven **and will forgive their sin** and heal their land.

Likewise, John the Baptist preached repentance for the forgiveness of sins:

Luke 3:3

And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of **repentance for the forgiveness of sins**.

And the Messiah taught that:

Luke 24:46–47

Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that **repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations**, beginning from Jerusalem.

It could be asked whether repentance is another path to forgiveness, parallel to the path of atonement. However, if we consider what a person repents to, we realize that Scripture is teaching not of two paths, but of one. When a person repents, he turns to God, and commits to following God's commands. What were His commands? All the laws commanded in His Word! Prior to the Messiah, this included making atonement for sins as specified in the Torah. After Messiah, this means accepting the atonement of His sacrifice for all time. In either case, repentance for those who had turned away from God was the first step back to Him. It is followed by making atonement (or accepting the atonement made on our behalf by the Messiah), and then receiving forgiveness as promised according to the plan set forth by the Father.

Similar arguments could be made regarding Scriptures that seem to speak of faith, baptism, confession of sins, forgiveness of others, etc., as prerequisites for God's forgiveness of sins. For example:

Acts 2:38

And Peter said to them, "**Repent** and be **baptized** every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 6:14–15

For if you **forgive others** their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

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.

All of the actions referred in verses like these (confession, faith, belief, confession, baptism, etc.) are results of a repentant life. A person who has truly repented has decided to turn back to God and live a life in submission to His commands, believing in faith that God will be true to His promise of providing forgiveness of sins according to His plan.

UNFORGIVEN SIN AND DEATH

Scripture indicates that the results of unforgiven sin are eternal death (and often physical death as well). Twice in Ezekiel we are told the results of unforgiven sin:

Ezekiel 18:4

Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: **the soul who sins shall die**.

Ezekiel 18:20

The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

We also see this in the case of the Israelites making the golden calf at Sinai. In this case, Moses wanted to make atonement for the people, but it was not accepted:

Exodus 32:30–35

The next day Moses said to the people, “You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; **perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.**” So Moses returned to the LORD and said, “Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.” But the LORD said to Moses, “**Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book.** But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, **I will visit their sin upon them.**” Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.

So atonement was not accepted with the result that forgiveness was not granted. Whoever sinned was blotted out of His book, presumably the book of life (see Ps. 56:8, 69:28, 139:16, Dan. 12:1, Phil. 4:3, Rev 3:5, 13:8, 18:8, 20:12–15, 21:27). Since their names were blotted out of the Book of Life, it seems clear that the result of unforgiven sin was in this case both physical affliction and in spiritual death.

This is no different than what Paul teaches in Romans:

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All of these verses seem to be talking about spiritual death.

Remembering that for those who are not on God’s path, repentance is the first step to returning to His path, we can see that Peter’s words teach the same thing – eternal death for those who do not repent (and by implication have not received forgiveness):

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.**

CONSEQUENCES OF FORGIVEN SIN

YHWH forgives sin, and in doing so, He restores the relationship with Him that was broken by the sin. But that does not mean there are never consequences of the sin, even sin that is forgiven. After the spies were sent in to the promised land, and the people were too afraid to enter that land in obedience to God, He forgave them, but He still did not allow them to enter. Instead He waited until that entire generation had died, and then He let their children enter. As a consequence of their sin, even though their relationship with God was restored, they themselves were not allowed to enter the promised land:

Numbers 14:18–24

‘The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.’ Please pardon the iniquity of this people, according to the greatness of your steadfast love, just as you have forgiven this people, from Egypt until now.” Then the LORD said, “**I have pardoned, according to your word. But truly, as I live, and as all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD, none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers.** And none of those who despised me shall see it. But my servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit and has followed me fully, I will bring into the land into which he went, and his descendants shall possess it.

Even Moses, when He sinned against God, was not allowed to enter the promised land, in spite of his relationship with God being restored:

Numbers 20:12

And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “**Because you did not believe in me,** to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore **you shall not bring this assembly into the land** that I have given them.”

Although this passage doesn't specifically say that Moses was forgiven, based on the way that God continued to communicate to Moses and work through him, it is seen that the relationship was restored. This is confirmed when upon his death Moses is referred to as the "servant of YHWH":

Deuteronomy 34:5

So **Moses the servant of the LORD died** there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD, Likewise, it was also stated that there was never a prophet like Moses that YHWH knew face to face:

Deuteronomy 34:10

And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, **whom the LORD knew face to face**, David is another case where we see that forgiven sin still had consequences.

2 Samuel 12:13-14

David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "**The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die.**"

The point is that we should not confuse the forgiveness of sin with the elimination of the physical consequences of sin. When God forgives sin, He removes the sin and restores the person's relationship with Him. He allows that person to come back into a right relationship with Him. So although God removes the eternal or spiritual consequences of the sin, He does not necessarily removed all the physical consequences of the sin.

FORGIVENESS AND MESSIAH

Peter in Acts teaches that the Messiah came to provide forgiveness of sins:

Acts 5:31

God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and **forgiveness of sins**.

Paul writes in Romans that God raised Yeshua from the dead for our trespasses (sins):

Romans 4:25

It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, **who was delivered up for our trespasses** and raised for our justification.

And the Messiah himself stated most plainly of all that his blood would be given for the forgiveness of sins:

Matthew 26:28

for this is **my blood** of the covenant, which is poured out for many **for the forgiveness of sins**.

Like the blood of the sin and guilt sacrifices that provided atonement for sins, the Messiah's blood was the atonement that allowed forgiveness. Hebrews states that forgiveness of sins does not occur without a blood sacrifice:

Hebrews 9:22

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins**.

In addition to these passages, there are numerous Scriptures that connect redemption with forgiveness in relation to Messiah's death. Some of these passages are addressed in the following section.

REDEMPTION AND MESSIAH

There are many Scriptures that speak of God as the Redeemer, or state that He has redeemed His people from some danger or enemy. The *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew* defines the Hebrew noun for "redeemer" and lists Scriptures where this is used as the title for God:

go'el Redeemer i.e., a title of God, *with a focus that he has redeemed or bought back a person from an unfavorable circumstance, and so now has a protective relationship with the one redeemed* (Job

19:25, Ps 19:15, Ps 78:35, Ps 103:4, Pr 23:11, Isa 41:14, Is 43:14, Is 44:6, Is 44:24, Is 47:4, Is 48:17, Is 49:7, Is 49:26, Is 54:5, Is 54:8, Is 59:20, Is 60:16, Is 63:16, Jer 50:34).

The references listed in the previous quote show the title of Redeemer can be applied to God in the general sense of Him being the “Deliver”, saving His people from disaster, destruction, or other negative situations. The picture of the title of Redeemer carries with it the notion of “buying back”. This picture is especially meaningful in view of His redeeming His people from the consequences of sin, in order to provide them a way to receive eternal life. He did that through “purchasing us with the blood” of His Son.

The *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* has a good summary discussion of the Messiah as the Redeemer, and the connection of His sacrifice with the atonement sacrifices prior to the Messiah:

The most important occurrence in the New Testament is Jesus’ description of his death “as a ransom for many” (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45). Three features stand out in Jesus’ words: his service is one of ransom, his self-sacrifice is the ransom price, and his ransom is substitutionary in character, “a ransom for many” (1 Tm 2:6). Jesus Christ “gave himself for us to redeem [ransom] us from all iniquity” (Ti 2:14). The ransom price was “the precious blood of Christ” who was “a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Pt 1:18, 19), thus linking Christ’s self-sacrifice to the sacrifices of the Old Testament as pointing to Christ. “The blood of goats and calves” was not able to save, but “an eternal redemption” was obtained by Christ’s blood (Heb 9:12). The great price of Christ’s ransom is contrasted with “perishable things such as silver or gold” (1 Pt 1:18; cf. Is 52:3). Paul motivates his readers by reminding them that they were bought with a price (1 Cor 6:20; 7:23). The grandest display of love is revealed in the fact that “Jesus Christ laid down his life for us”; that is why “we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers” (1 Jn 3:16; cf. Jn 10:14–18; 15:13; Heb 10:3–18). In heaven the redeemed sing the new song to the one who “was slain and by thy blood didst ransom men for God” (Rv 5:9; cf. 14:3, 4).

The following Scriptures speak of the Messiah as the Redeemer of God’s people:

Titus 2:13–14

waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior **Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness** and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

It is interesting that Yeshua redeems us “from all lawlessness”. This could be translated “all Torahlessness” since the common way English translates Torah is “law”. Lawlessness is life outside of Torah; that is, life that is not in accordance with the laws and commands of God. Breaking of the Torah was sin, and resulted in a broken relationship with God. The Messiah came to redeem us from the consequences of that unforgiven state of sin. He took our penalty upon Himself in order to redeem us:

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.

To clarify in Gal 3:13, it should be noted that Paul is actually quoting Dt 27:26, which is itself a part of the Torah. The “curse of the law (Torah)” is not the Torah itself, but rather the penalty that results from breaking the Torah. No one but Messiah kept Torah perfectly. Therefore no one kept ALL of Torah, and so everyone was under the curse of Torah.

To the point of this discussion, however, Gal 3:13 shows that the Messiah redeemed us (literally, paid for the results of our breaking God’s law) by taking upon himself the penalty that we deserved.

Yeshua Himself taught that He had come to give His life as a ransom:

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.**”

The word “ransom”, as stated previously, is the one of the connection points between the concepts of “atonement” and “redeem”. The Hebrew word for atonement can be translated “ransom”, and the Hebrew word for “redeem” also can have the meaning of “ransom”. Both apply to the Messiah in regard to His death.

Paul and Peter also refer the Messiah's death as a "ransom":

1 Timothy 2:5–6

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

1 Peter 1:18–19

knowing that **you were ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but **with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.**

Again, these verses, using the word "ransomed", speak not only of redemption but also of atonement. We were ransomed ("bought back" and our sins "covered") with the blood of Messiah. That blood was the ransom payment that delivered us from eternal death that would have been a consequence of our sin that separates us from a right relationship with God. It was also the sacrifice of atonement, like that of the unblemished lamb, that covers our sin and in accordance with the plan set forth by God to provide forgiveness.

Paul, too, clearly links redemption with forgiveness when He speaks about the forgiveness of sins made possible through our redemption by the Messiah:

Ephesians 1:7

In him we have **redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses**, according to the riches of his grace,

Colossians 1:13–14

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, **in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

Hebrews also connects the concepts of eternal redemption, forgiveness of sins, and "once and for all" atonement to the sacrifice of the Messiah:

Hebrews 9:11–12

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but **by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.**

Hebrews 9:22

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**

Hebrews 10:11–12

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered **for all time a single sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God,

The Messiah's death was the act of redemption by which He paid for the spiritual consequences of our sins, providing the necessary atonement sacrifice, with the result that God would forgive our sins just as He promised he would in His Torah. That sacrifice provided both redemption and atonement, resulting in forgiveness. It was a single act, and while it can be viewed from different perspectives, it had a singular purpose. It removed the spiritual consequences of our sins, thereby restoring a right relationship with God. This is forgiveness – the act of God removing the spiritual consequences of our sin to restoring us to a right relationship with Him. He chose to do it via the pattern He set forth in His Torah – a pattern that involved a sacrifice of atonement. That is how He redeems His people from the dire consequences of sin.

FOR ALL TIME

Consider again the passage in Hebrews previously listed:

Hebrews 10:11–12

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never

take away sins. But when Christ had offered **for all time** a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God,

This states that the Messiah's sacrifice for sins was "for all time". Such a phrase indicates past, present, and future. This is consistent with other Scriptures that teach of the unchanging nature of God and his Torah. His plan of forgiveness of sins involved the death of His Son, the Messiah. This was true for all time. Thus, it applied to people both before Messiah as well as after Him.

It is hard for us to understand time as God does. As humans, we think chronologically. It is all we know. But Scriptures indicate God is not bound by our limited understanding of Him and His view of time. For example, the Book of Life apparently has all the names of the followers of God written in it from before the foundation of the world:

Revelation 13:8

and all who dwell on earth will worship [the beast], everyone **whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life** of the Lamb who was slain.

Revelation 17:8

The beast that you saw was, and is not, and is about to rise from the bottomless pit and go to destruction. And the dwellers on earth **whose names have not been written in the book of life from the foundation of the world** will marvel to see the beast, because it was and is not and is to come.

And John tells us that Yeshua existed in the very beginning together with YHWH:

John 1:1–4

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Not only did He exist in the beginning of creation, but all things were created through Him. John says He was the light and the life of man – all from the very beginning of time. It seems this reference of the Messiah being the light and the life of men from the beginning of time must refer to the plan of salvation which would require the sacrifice of His life for mankind. It was God's plan from the very beginning. This is also reflected in Acts:

Acts 2:23

this Jesus, delivered up **according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God**, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

And Peter, when teaching of the redeeming and atoning sacrifice of the Messiah, states that this was all "foreknown before the foundation of the world":

1 Peter 1:18–20

knowing that you were **ransomed** from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but **with the precious blood** of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. **He was foreknown before the foundation of the world** but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you

So Yeshua existed from the beginning of time. And the plan for his sacrificial death to provide for redemption, atonement, and forgiveness was part of God's plan from the beginning of time. The writer of Hebrews that spoke of the Messiah offering "for all time a single sacrifice for sins", went on to make that point in even a stronger way:

Hebrews 10:12–14

But when **Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. **For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.**

The Messiah, in a single sacrificial act that was foreknown and planned by YHWH from the very beginning of creation, allows for the forgiveness of sins, past, present, and future.

SUMMARY

The concepts of atonement, forgiveness, and redemption, are fundamentally different concepts. Each can be used in a wide variety of life circumstances. Yet in one particular situation – that of God’s plan for providing eternal redemption and forgiveness of sins – there is a connection between all three of these concepts.

God made a covenant with His people. He promises to protect His people and take them for His own if they obey His commands. If they don’t obey His commands, that is sin. Sin breaks the relationship established in the covenant. The result would be separation from God and from His protection. This would be “spiritual death” -- eternal separation from God. However, by the grace of God He provided a way to restore that broken relationship. It is a plan to redeem His people from eternal separation from Him. It is a plan that offers forgiveness. This plan involves the redemptive and atoning sacrifice of His Son. It was His plan from the beginning of time, even though it was not fully revealed until after the Messiah came. The sin and guilt offerings in Torah are a picture of the sacrifice of the Messiah “offered for all time”. But those animal sacrifices could never take away sins. That was done once and for all time by the sacrifice of the Messiah as the unblemished, spotless Lamb of God.

The sacrificial death of the Messiah, in one act for all time, was God’s plan from the foundation of the world, as His way to offer redemption, atonement, and forgiveness of sin.