

Jesus Perfected

The Importance of Being "Perfected!"

First, understand, as Kevin has said, under the Law of Moses, **there was forgiveness of sins**. There are at least 10 reference in Leviticus alone that say that he or they shall be forgiven for the sin he or they committed. There are more reference in the book of Numbers also. So an obedient adherent of the Law of Moses **was** forgiven of their sins.

Sins are forgiven under the Law of Moses

Leviticus 19:22 (ESV)

22 And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the LORD for his sin that he has committed, and **he shall be forgiven for the sin** that he has committed.

However, there is also an idea of sins being "rolled" forward that comes from Heb 10:1-4, (i.e. the Law was but a shadow, Heb 10:1; the substance is in Christ, Col 2:17)

The inferiority of animal sacrifices

Hebrews 10:1-4 (ESV)

1 For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? 3 But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For **it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**.

Now one might get the idea that the worshipers were not really forgiven of their sins, and as we've seen from Leviticus, you would be wrong. That's not the point the Hebrew writer is making. His point IS that animal sacrifices for taking away sins ARE WORTHLESS. They CAN'T TAKE AWAY SIN. And therefore needed to be sacrificed over and over. Yet, while the sacrifices were worthless, the people's sins WERE forgiven.

So, How do we resolve these ideas?

Let me suggest an idea and then use a point that Paul makes in Romans to substantiate it

There are two parts to salvation

(i.e. the forgiveness of sins.)

Our part and God's part.

Our Part

Our part can be summed up in one word: obedience. The obedience of [that comes from] faith (Rom 1:5)

- Luke 13:3,5 - Unless you repent you will all... perish. So what do you do, obey & repent
- John 8:24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins." What to do? obey & believe
- If you obey, you will love Christ & keep his commandments, etc (see the elementary teaching about Christ)

God's part

God's part can be summed up in one phrase: He takes away our sins and gives us his righteousness (see Romans 3-8)

Now even before the Law of Moses, God was forgiving sins and giving righteousness. How do I know

- Noah was righteous, Gen 6:9
- Abraham was "credited" with righteousness, Gen 15:6
- Lot was righteous, 2 Pet 2:7,8

So when God took away their sin and "credited" them with righteousness, their accounts were reconciled, they were balanced. But, no valid payment was made (it's impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, Heb 10:1-4). *So where did the debt go?*

God had no valid reason to take away sin and credit righteousness, why? Because no one was righteous (Rom 3:9-18). That is why Jesus had to be "perfected" through suffering to show that one could suffer temptation & death and not sin to the point that the Law would declare him righteous (i.e. without sin or transgressions). He was perfected to provide a valid reason able to take away sin and give righteousness.

But Jesus was not perfected before he became a human, so God took on the debt with a promise to pay. We would call that today, "revolving" credit. And the annual sacrifice for the entire assembly of Israelites seems to be intended to show, that while their sins were forgiven, no valid payment had been paid... yet.

Therefore it is God's account in which the debt to be paid is rolled forward, building up, piling up until "in the fullness of time" (Gal 4:4) he makes payment. When God makes payment through his son, ALL ACCOUNTS ARE SETTLED, paid in full.

And that is why Paul says in Romans (*On next page*)

Romans 3:23-26 (ESV)

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and **are justified by his grace as a gift**, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a **propitiation by his blood**, to be **received by faith**. This was **to show God's righteousness, BECAUSE in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins**. 26 It was **to show his righteousness** at the present time, **so that he might be just** and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Who's righteousness? Christ's righteousness. God sacrificed His Son "so that He might be just." God was justified (i.e. made righteous) by Christ's sacrifice, just as we are justified when God gives us Christ's righteousness (to those who [have an obedient] faith in Jesus).