

ABC's of SALVATION

by

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

PITCHED

“Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and thou shalt pitch it within and without with pitch” (Genesis 6:14).

THESE words were spoken by God to Noah when the storm of divine wrath was gathering upon a wicked world. The race’s cup of iniquity was almost full. Man, with conscience as his guide, had reached the point at which **“every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”** (Genesis 6:5).

The fountains of the deep were ready to overflow their fury as a protest against his wickedness; the windows of heaven were groaning under their load of pent-up wrath against his iniquity. Of all the race only one man and his house **“found grace in the eyes of the Lord.”** To this man God revealed the plans of the ark as a means of escape from the oncoming judgment. None can deny that the ark was a wonderful type of the Lord Jesus Christ (I Peter 3:18-22).

Noah was commanded **“pitch it (the ark) within and without with pitch.”** It was this pitch that kept the waters of judgment out. The word rendered pitch is *kaphar*. Some of the various renderings of this word in the Old Testament have a precious meaning to us who have taken refuge in Christ from judgment.

I. Atonement

The word *kaphar* is rendered atonement more than seventy times in the Old Testament. It is the word used in Leviticus 16 in connection with the Day of Atonement. The Jews still use it in the words “Yom Kippur” which mean **“Day of Atonement.”** The word means *cover, coverings, or to cover*. The Levitical offerings covered the sins of Israel in anticipation of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. In other words, they were promissory notes which were paid in full by the sacrifice of Christ. “For the time then present” (Hebrews 9:9). God both planned and accepted these notes and thus passed over or covered **“the sins done aforetime”** (Romans 3:25), i. e., before the Cross.

Suppose that after every detail of the Day of Atonement had been carried out, some Israelite should have said, “I wonder if my sins are really covered?”

He would have been making God out a liar (I John 5:10), for God had said, “**For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement (kaphar) for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul**” (Leviticus 17:11).

How firm a foundation,
Ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith,
In His excellent Word!

II. Cleansed

“So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed (*kaphar*) of the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it” (Numbers 35:33).

In this scripture the word is rendered cleansed. The entire 14th chapter of Leviticus is given to the ceremonial cleansing of a leper. Suffice to say it was by blood and water. There is no record of any Israelite having gone through this ceremonial cleansing for it followed only when the plague of leprosy had been healed in the leper (Leviticus 14:3).

So far as we know the ceremony of Leviticus was never performed, for no leper was ever healed, save Naaman, and he was a Gentile and did not have to conform to this law of cleansing (Luke 4:27). It is not strange then that the Lord Jesus told the ten lepers, “**Go shew yourselves unto the priests**” (Luke 17:14). These priests saw that which no other priest had ever looked upon. This may account for the fact that later on “**a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith**” (Acts 6:7).

It was not only a physical fact but it was a great scriptural truth that “**blood and water**” came from the pierced side of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 19:34). The believer is “Saved by the blood of the Crucified One” and cleansed by “**washing of water by the word**” (Ephesians 5:26). John 13 is the great cleansing chapter of the New Testament. In it we find both typical and direct teaching.

In type we find “**He riseth up from supper** (type of death) **and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself** (for cleansing).” By direct teaching He said to Peter, “**He that is washed (in the blood) needeth not save to wash his feet** (cleanse by the Word), **but is clean every whit: and ye are clean**” (John 13:10).

A little later, in His great intercessory prayer He said, “**Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth**” (John 17:17).

This is further seen in Hebrews 10:22 where it is written, “**Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience** (by blood), **and our bodies washed with pure water** (by the Word).” Thus we see why *kaphar* is rendered cleansed.

III. Purged

“Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged (*kaphar*)” (Isaiah 6:6, 7).

What was it that purged his sin? It was the coal taken from the altar. What altar was this? It was the brazen altar of sacrifice. In a previous chapter we called your attention to the fact that Calvary is “God’s Purgatory.” It was there that He, by Himself, purged our sins (Hebrews 1:3).

In the last phrase of the preceding section, we added, for explanation, the words by blood after the word conscience in Hebrews 10:22. That this is the scriptural meaning is shown in Hebrews 9:14, where it is written, **“How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”**

Thus we can see why *kaphar* is rendered purged.

IV. Forgave

“But he, being full of compassion, forgave (*kaphar*) their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath” (Psalm 78:38).

In Acts 13:14-37, the Apostle Paul preached the death, burial and resurrection of Christ to the Jews in the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia. It is a clear scriptural presentation of the gospel bulwarked by Old Testament references. His conclusion is found in verse 38 in the words, **“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.”**

Because of His finished work on Calvary, Paul could preach forgiveness of sins.

A conscience of sins is a terrible thing. These notes are being written in a large northern city. Just last evening a man sought an interview with me. I found him to be a graduate of one of the leading colleges of this country, and for a number of years he had been teaching in the city schools. He was so perturbed over his sins that he seemed to be near a nervous collapse.

He was not only worried over past sins, but he was worrying over sins he thought he might commit in the future. He had sought the advice of a number of modernistic preachers and had even gone to some Catholic priests, but to no avail. I could not persuade him to accept Christ, but he did admit that I spoke with a note of positiveness that he had not found in the interviews with the others.

The gospel preacher can speak with positiveness on the forgiveness of sins on the basis of the finished work of Christ on Calvary. Thus we see why *kaphar* is rendered forgave.

V. Ransom

“Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down into the pit: I have found a ransom (kapher)” (Job 33:24).

Although the Lord charged Elihu with darkening counsel by words without knowledge (Job 38:2) yet the latter spoke eternal truth in this sentence. A Ransom has been found who keeps men, who trust in Him, from going down into the pit. It is the same Person who said in Matthew 16:18, **“Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** He is the Redeemer (Galatians 3:13); He has paid the ransom and set the captive free. One of the words in the New Testament that is translated redemption is *lutroo* and means *to set free by paying a price*. Again we see why *kapher* is rendered ransom.

VI. Camphire

“My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire (kapher) in the vineyards of Engedi” (Song of Solomon 1:14).

The word camphire must not be confused with the word now generally written camphor. The latter refers to the tree, *camphora officinarum*, found in Formosa and a few nearby places. The former was a plant of Palestine, the blossoms of which were used by the maidens in their bosom bouquets. The fragrance of these flowers was supposed to make the young ladies more attractive to their lovers.

To us who are redeemed, Christ “Is the Lily of the Valley.” In I Peter 2:7, it is written, **“Unto you therefore which believe he is precious.”** As someone has well said, “He is what He is because He did what He did.”

Thus we see why *kapher* is rendered camphire.

VII. Villages

“I am my beloved’s, and his desire is toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the fields; let us lodge in the villages (kaphar)” (Song of Solomon 7:10, 11).

The one who was **“black but comely”** (Song of Solomon 1:5), after all her faithlessness, excuses, yearnings, and despair, is now in unbroken fellowship, at home, with her lover.

In this scene we find another beautiful Old Testament picture of the redeemed “at home” with the Lord. It is at that time the saints will sing, **“Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth”** (Revelation 5:9, 10).

The one who had looked like the tents of Kedar will then look like the curtains of Solomon (Song of Solomon 1:5).

Thus we see why *kaphar* is rendered villages. Hallelujah, what a Saviour!

Though our nature's fall in Adam
Seemed to shut us out from God,
Thus it was His counsel brought us
Nearer still, through Jesus' blood;
For in Him we found redemption,
Grace and glory in the Son,
Oh, the height and depth of mercy!
'Christ and we, through grace, are one.'

~ end of chapter 16 ~

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