

New Testament 24
“This Is Life Eternal”
(John 16-17)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background, revealing more of the sacredness of the things Jesus did and said regarding His atonement.)

I. To fully feel the significance of the **atonement of Jesus Christ, which began at the Last Supper and was not completed until after the resurrection**, we should briefly remind ourselves why the atonement was necessary.

A. Due to the Fall of Adam, we were all cut off from the presence of God, both **physically and spiritually**. Because of this, our bodies would decay in the dust, and our spirits become captive to the bondage of Satan. Mankind was doomed.

II. Knowing this would occur, before the creation of the earth, a Redeemer was foreordained to save us.

A. This foreordination was revealed through the writings of Moses and Abraham (Moses 4:1-4, and Abraham 3:27).

B. It was because of this news that before this earth, men “shouted for Joy” (Job 38:7).

C. Old Testament prophecies also revealed that Jesus had already been chosen to be The Branch and The Great High Priest who would save us.

1. The Lord commanded Zechariah to anoint a man named Joshua (The name Joshua and Jesus are the same name) *as High Priest* (Zechariah 6:11-13). He was to be called “The Branch” (v. 12). *

2. As the chapter heading of Zechariah 6 explains, “Zechariah crowns **Joshua, the high priest, in similitude of Christ**, the Branch, who shall come ---.”

III. On Israel’s holiest day, the Day of Atonement, **Israel’s High Priest**, whose role was to teach of Christ, always offered an intercessory prayer before making that Holy Day’s sacred offering, pleading to God to accept His offering **as Atonement for Israel’s sins**.

A. **Jesus, Israel’s True High Priest, now offered the True Intercessory Prayer (John 17)**.

B. **The sacrificial offering to be given would be Himself**. “The hour is come... I have glorified thee... I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do” (John 17:1, 4).

C. In that prayer, Jesus **prayed that His offering might sanctify others**, that all His disciples (including those who would believe their words) might be made One --- with Him and with His Father (John 17:20-22, 24).

D. Then, after that prayer, **He went into Gethsemane to bring it about, to perform the actual work of the “At-one-ment,” to offer Himself as sacrifice -- that all repentant believers might be made One with His Father**.

IV. Jesus’ Atonement **was the turning point of the Bible and the destiny of mankind**.

A. The term “chiasm” means *cross*. In a chiasm there is a Reversal Point.

B. This Reversal Point occurred **because of Jesus’ sacrifice upon the Cross!**

C. **This chiasma is revealed by Jehovah’s relationship as Israel’s Bridegroom**.

D. The Bible begins (in Genesis) with a bridegroom and a bride who are cast out of a paradise, but ends (in Revelation 21-22) with the True Bridegroom restoring His

Bride to a far greater paradise. **The atonement, with its central focus on the cross, is the Turning Point for this reversal of fortunes.**

<i>Genesis</i>	<i>Revelation</i>
A. A Bounteous Paradise (Eden) (Genesis 2:8-17)	A' A Far Greater Paradise (Revelation 21-22)
B. Tree of life; Fountain of waters (Gen. 2:9-10)	B' More Fruits from Tree; Greater Fountains (Rev. 22:1-2)
C. Bridegroom reigns (Gen. 2:15)	C' Bridegroom to reign (Rev. 19:11-16)
D. Bride from Bridegroom's side to be One (Gen. 2:21-24)	D' Bridegroom brings Bride to His side/One (Rev. 19:7; 21:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)
E. Bride takes Bridegroom's name (Gen. 2:23)	E' Bride to take Bridegroom's name (Rev. 22:4)
F. Bride eats forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:1-6)	F' Bride drinks cup of consummation (Mark 14:25; Rev. 19:9)
G. Bride to be cast out of God's presence (Gen. 3:6,23)	G' Bride to re-enter God's presence (Rev: 21:2-3)
H. Bridegroom takes on Bride's guilt (Gen 3:6, 17)	H' Bridegroom to bear Bride's stains (Rev. 19:13, 15)
I. Bridegroom provides covering garments (Gen 3:21)	I' Bridegroom to provide glorious garments (Rev. 19:8)
J. Bridegroom and Bride cast out (Gen. 3:23-4)	J' Serpent to be cast out (Rev. 20:2-3)
K. Bridegroom covenants Home & Seed (Gen. 13:14-16)	K' Bridegroom prepares Home for Seed (John 14:2; Rev. 3:21)
L. Israel receives covenants (Gen. 15)	L' Israel will again receive covenants (Romans 11:26-36)
M. Bride (Israel) is unfaithful (Ezekiel 16:8, 38)	M' Bride (Gentiles) will be unfaithful (Romans 11:21-25)
Q. Bridegroom promises covenant to Gentiles (Shown in many books, esp. Ruth)	Q' Bridegroom covenants with Gentiles (Acts 10:34, 47)

X The Atonement

Christ comes, as Bridegroom, and fulfills all Bridegroom symbolism.

Bridegroom offers covenant to Israel; Bridegroom purchases Bride with sacrificial blood of His at-one-ment.

The Fate of Mankind is reversed.

V. There are many powerful meanings to Christ's Atonement. They are best understood through several sub-portions, *all fulfilling those prophecies of the Bridegroom who would come*. And relate to the traditional role of a Bridegroom and His Bride. And together, they all form a part of a vital Chiastic Center.

A. Traditionally a bridegroom offers his bride a cup of covenant. At the Last Supper, Christ offered His disciples a covenanting cup of wine (Matthew 26:27-28), the same cup from which He drank. To drink from the same cup was an act solidifying an alliance.¹ Significantly, it was the third cup of wine, which was called the "cup of redemption." Rabbis traditionally related that cup to God's promise, given to Israel in Egypt, "I will redeem you...and I will take you to me for a people, and I

will be to you a God...”(Exodus 6:6-7).ⁱⁱ In offering this cup, Jesus said, “This cup is the new [covenant] in my blood...” (Luke 22:20). (“Testament” means “Covenant”).

B. If the bride is willing, she accepts the cup. **The disciples partook, covenanting to remember Him always and, in essence, to take upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ** (Mark 14:23).

C. The Bridegroom prays for Oneness. As explained above, the prayer Jesus offered at the Last Supper was highly significant. He prayed earnestly that He and all His disciples would truly be "One" (John 17:1-21).

D. Traditionally the Bridegroom often washed and anointed the Bride. Jesus earlier **taught He, as their Covenanted One, would cleanse and anoint His people** (Ezekiel 16:9). Because of that, some Hebrew husbands washed and anointed their brides.ⁱⁱⁱ Jesus begins His cleansing by washing His disciples' feet at the Last Supper. We will learn in our next segment how He completed this cleansing and anointing in Gethsemane.

VI. Thus the intimacy of marriage was used by Christ to symbolize His relationship to those faithful who would accept His salvation, **because to be One with Him is a powerful and marvelous experience.**

A. Melvin J. Ballard described a **dream in which it was revealed to him what it would be like to be in Christ's presence and personally experience the love of the glorified Lord.**

“If I shall live to be a million years old, I shall never forget that smile. He [the Savior] took me into his arms and kissed me, pressed me to his bosom, and blessed me, until the marrow of my bones seemed to melt! The feeling that I had in the presence of him who hath all things in his hands, to have his love, his affection, and his blessing was such that if I ever can receive that of which I had but a foretaste, I would give all that I am, all that I ever hope to be, to feel what I then felt!” (Hinckley, Bryant S., *Sermons and Missionary Services of Melvin Joseph Ballard*, Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book, 1949), p. 156.

ⁱ Wilson, Marvin R., *Our Father Abraham: Jewish Roots of the Christian Faith*, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and Dayton, Ohio: Center for Judaic-Christian Studies, 1989), p. 211. Wilson also says in modern Jewish ceremonies, when the bride and groom share a cup of wine, it witnesses that though once two people, they are now One, p. 211.

ⁱⁱ Wilson, *Our Father Abraham*, p. 246.

ⁱⁱⁱ Daniel I. Block, “Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel,” in Ken M. Campbell, editor, *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, (Downer's Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003), p. 45.

*A true modern event gives powerful witness of how Jesus can save us. And interestingly, it relates to **how Jesus Christ truly is The Branch which will save us.** Professor Brad Wilcox has recounted an event occurring to his brother-in-law many years ago as a youth.

While hiking with his father and a group of scouts upon a mountain top in Japan, the boy slipped and plunged down the side for about 60 feet where his body rested for a time on a slope. Unfortunately a falling rock struck him in the head, causing him to plunge further over the slope. His father despaired as he then heard that rock striking its way down the rest of the mountain to the bottom, deep below. He knew his son could not have survived.

Risking his own life, the father desperately scrambled or fell down parts of the mountain to learn the fate of his son. When he reached the bottom, he was astonished to see the **body of his son had been stopped in its fall by one lone branch growing out of the side of the cliff many feet above. Miraculously his son's body struck this lone branch in such a way that it hung there, doubled over the branch.**

Other miracles occurred in the way the boy was rescued in turn by his father, then doctors, and ultimately the Lord.

But the major miracle came through that *one lone branch* that made all else possible.

Surely this great miracle was not meant for just this boy, or for his family, but to be shared as **a witness to us all --- that Jesus the Christ, "The Branch" (Zechariah 6:11-13), can rescue us all from Adam's Fall and then each of us from one's own spiritual failings.**

(For more details on this story, see Brad Wilcox, *The Continuous Atonement*, Deseret Book, 2009, pp. 81-99).