

Understanding the Jehovah's Witness Teaching of the Ransom Sacrifice and the Atonement

The Ransom became necessary due to the sin of Adam, which caused inherited imperfection. All men became deserving of death, and Jehovah would invalidate His own legal standards to forgive man out of hand and undermine his position as Universal Sovereign.

More important than man's predicament, Jehovah had to answer this rebellious challenge thrown down by Satan because: "If they were left unanswered, confidence in and support for God's rulership would finally be eroded... If law and order deteriorated, would havoc not reign throughout the universe? God thus owed it to himself and to his righteous ways to vindicate his sovereignty. He owed it to his faithful servants to allow them to demonstrate their unbreakable loyalty to him. This meant dealing with the plight of sinful humanity in a way that gave precedence to the paramount issues."(Watchtower, Feb 15, 1991 p.9)

The payment necessary for this ransom was the death of a perfect man. "This foreshadowed ransom had to be the exact equivalent of Adam, since the death penalty that God justly applied to Adam resulted in the condemnation of the human race." (ibid. p. 12)

The ransom was paid to Jehovah (not Satan) through Jesus' death.

The ransom paid for the inherited sin from Adam. Jehovah's justice now satisfied he is "lovingly willing to 'wipe out,' or 'blot out,' the sins charged against the account of 'the man that has faith in Jesus.'" (Watchtower , Dec. 1, 1985, p.6)

Members of the 144,000 become part of the New Covenant and are declared righteous: "Logically, those whom Jehovah chooses to make up the righteous "new heavens," or Kingdom government under the King Jesus Christ, are the first to benefit fully from this merciful arrangement in this system of things." (ibid. p.10) also, "During their human life, the 144,000 "holy ones," of whom only a small remnant remain on earth in this time of the end, 'die with reference to sin.' After their symbolic death, those "called to be holy ones" are raised up to "a newness of life." Having declared them righteous, Jehovah is in a position to beget them by his spirit to be his spiritual "children." They are "born again" and adopted as "God's sons."... They become spiritual Israelites and are taken into the new covenant." (ibid. p.11)

The "other sheep" are gathered into the Great Crowd and ARE NOT members of the New Covenant. They are declared righteous because they "do good" to the 144,000. "That the "other sheep" are God's friends and even now have a relatively righteous standing before him is also made clear in Jesus' prophecy on 'the sign of his presence,' which includes the illustration of the sheep and the goats. Because the "sheep" do good to the remnant of Christ's 144,000 "brothers" still on earth, they are blessed by Jesus' Father and are called "righteous ones." Like Abraham, they are accounted, or declared, righteous as friends of God. Their righteous standing will also mean survival for them when the "goats" depart into "everlasting cutting-off." (Ibid. p.17)

During the Millennium Jesus and the 144,000 will train the Great Crowd, their children, and those resurrected during the Millennium. "During the Millennium, the enthroned Lamb, Christ Jesus, together with his 144,000 associate kings and priests, will apply a program of spiritual and physical "curing of the nations." (Revelation 22:1, 2) Such "nations" will be made up of the survivors of the great tribulation, any children born to them after Har-Magedon, and those who come back in the "resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (ibid p.17)

At the end of the Millennium, there will be a test, and some will fail. Those who pass will (finally) have their names written in The Book of Life "Those who prove loyal to Jehovah will have their names indelibly written in the "book of life," as being perfect in integrity and worthy of the right to everlasting life on earth. Jehovah himself will then declare them righteous in the complete sense" (ibid. p.18)