

Why We Teach Kids... Learning from Jesus

1. The significance of age.

Then little children were brought to Him for Him to lay His hands on them and pray. But the disciples scolded those who brought them. But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me and do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these (Matt 19:13-14).

Why did He say that? What does Jesus see in children?

2. The nature of hardening (learn more at: www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/8Sin/DefHardHearted.aspx).

The Bible uses the term "hard heart" when describing people who are not receptive to the gospel. It can have a range of meanings to refer to people who are insensitive, or stubborn, or fiercely antagonistic to the historical truth of Jesus Christ.

This hardening is self generated. The Bible records instances of a divine hardening as well.

a) God hardens the heart of those who have already hardened their own.

b) God hardens in the process of exacting judgment.

c) God does not appear to harden to prevent one from repenting but instead to prevent one from surrendering in unrepentance. Despite divine hardening of the Canaanites (Josh 11:20), Rahab (Josh 2:1-22) exemplified a person who was saved because of her faith (Rom 10:11-13). God would later honor her as a part of Jesus' genealogy (Matt 1:5) and as an example of faith (Heb 11:31; James 2:2).

Jesus describes the hardness of the Jews in the context of stiffened unbelief that can be figuratively understood as a growing calcification of bone: a hard obstinate resolve of unbelief.

It is the refusal to believe what eyes have seen and what ears have heard that Jesus was in fact the Christ, the promised Messiah who came to redeem and whose promise of salvation was true.

As the writer of Hebrews points out, the cause of hardening is the deceitfulness of sin (Heb 3:13), and the Bible records how extensive this deceit can occur. These can be seen as rationalization or lies people may tell to themselves and to others.

Example: Instead of recognizing Jesus' resurrection and empty tomb, Jewish religious authorities bribed the tomb guards, "and said, You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep. And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble.' And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day." (Matt 28:13-15).

Culture has hijacked the biblical meaning of faith. Biblical faith is the act of believing something is factually true with trust (learn more at: www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/9Salvation/FaithNTThemesJesus.aspx).

Faith is not wishful thinking, hoping for the best or a leap into the abstract or warm feelings.

It is an oxymoron to say "I need faith to believe."

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3. Teach the facts.

When Jesus spoke of fulfilling the Law in Matthew 5:17, He meant it in a literal sense. As Gentiles, our children did not have the benefit of learning about Jewish religious practices like children of the first century; thus, they are unaware of the significance of the sacrificial system mandated by the Mosaic Covenant. And without this understanding, it is difficult to truly appreciate the atonement of Jesus Christ and the gospel.

Jesus is clear about His purpose in life when He says, "it is finished" (John 19:30). Many have wondered whether this was in reference to His work in life or with His death, and some churches tend to focus on His works while alive as examples for people to follow; however, Jesus was speaking in reference to the work accomplished with His death (learn more at: www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/AtonementItsFinished.aspx).

Substitution forms the basis of atonement. After their freedom from slavery in Egypt, God teaches the nation of Israel the process that one would do to atone for intentional (i.e. Lev 1:1-17) and unintentional sins (Lev 4:1-35). In both instances, God requires the confession of sin onto an unblemished animal, its sacrifice and burnt offering. Once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the sins of the nation of Israel were expiated. The sacrificial ritual required two male goats that were physically perfect in age and condition. One goat was slain and its blood and flesh were offered as a substitute payment of the nation's sin. The other goat (scapegoat) received the sins of the nation and was released to the wild to signify that sin left the Hebrew nation (Lev 16:1-34).

Just like the sacrificial lamb, Jesus suffered, in the place of human beings, the penalty that God would have placed on us: death. Jesus experienced the full weight of God's wrath that had accumulated for the sins of human beings since Creation as well as into the future.

For God, Jesus' sacrificial death paid God's judicial requirement for the judgment of sin in full. Jesus' penal substitution was a demonstration of God's justice and a requirement of holiness.

For us, Jesus' sacrificial death imputed His righteousness upon us and brought us into God's favor. Jesus' penal substitution was individually for each one of us and a supreme demonstration of God's love (learn more at: www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/AtonementSubstitution.aspx).

Jesus' literal fulfillment of the Law can be seen in **expiation** and **propitiation**. Expiation is the "covering or removal of sin," and propitiation means "to make favorable."

The Ark of the Covenant's lid was a slab of pure gold where two gold cherubim faced each other bowing toward the seat. Their angelic wings stretched out towards each other constituted the throne of God, and this indicated the place where God sat when He communicated with Moses. This seat was known as the "mercy seat"; however, a more accurate translation would be "thing for propitiation", "means of propitiation" or "place of propitiation".

Just as the Old Testament High Priest applied the blood of the sacrificed lamb on the mercy seat to expiate the sins of Israel, Jesus Christ, the High Priest Himself, provided the blood for the expiation of sins of human beings.

Just as the mercy seat was the "place of propitiation", Jesus became the "mercy seat", the place of propitiation for human beings, and made us favorable to God.

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The atonement of Jesus Christ is both an expiation and a propitiation (learn more at: www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/AtonementExpiationVsPropitiation.aspx).

Redemption, defined as "the act of freeing or liberating", is associated with the atonement of Jesus Christ. The Bible records this concept in two ways:

Jesus spoke of redemption as a ransom with a price and its basis and conceptual origination can be found in the Old Testament as redemption of the Firstborn by the Levites and the practice of Atonement money (learn more at: www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/AtonementRansomRedemption.aspx).

In the Old Testament, this concept of redemption was applied to property (Lev 25:23-34; Ruth 4:1-12), animals (Ex 34:19-20), individuals (Lev 25:35-55) and the nation of Israel (Deut 15:15), and in most cases, freedom from obligation, bondage or danger was secured by the payment of a price, ransom, or bribe.

Exodus 13:1-16 and Numbers 18:15-17 is one of the earliest commands God makes regarding the ransoming of human beings in the "ransom of the firstborn".

When in the Promised Land, the nation of Israel was to dedicate to God their firstborn sons and firstborn male animals. These firstborns were obligated to God, because they, heeding His instructions of marking their doorposts with the blood of a lamb, were redeemed from Egypt's tenth plague.

For this redemption, God placed a special claim on the Hebrew first born male son, and these first born sons were presented to God when they were one month old. Regarded as God's property, the father had to redeem or buy back the child from the priest, and this redemption price could not exceed five shekels (Num 18:15-16). This ceremonial procedure was to remind people of God's judgment and His gracious deliverance.

In Exodus 30:11-16, God commands that when a census is taken, all Hebrew males 20 years and older are to pay a half shekel in atonement of their lives / soul. This practice became known as "atonement money".

God considered everyone above age 20 to be in need of atonement, and the price was the same regardless of age or wealth.

Ransom redemption focuses on God's legal and judicial perspective as it pertains to the price paid to God who was offended by the sins of mankind. Jesus Christ's ransom price was sufficient for all mankind and provisionally available to all.

The apostles speak of redemption as the release or emancipation of a prisoner and in specific context of Christians or the nation of Israel (learn more at: www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/AtonementLiberationRedemption.aspx).

Liberation redemption places an emphasis on the deliverance from sin and its penalty. From God's perspective of His relationship to human beings, the liberation from the consequences of sin is only effectual for those who believe.

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Reconciliation is the restoration of a divine relationship, and its consequence is eternal life for one's spirit / soul (Rom 5:10; 11:15) (learn more at: [www. Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/AtonementReconciliation.aspx](http://www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/AtonementReconciliation.aspx)).

So great is His love that God, in His provision and means for reconciliation, gave former offenders the privilege of representing Him (as ambassadors to the King) so that others may hear the good news (2 Cor 5:18-20).

The **resurrection** attested to Jesus' deity and validated His claim of Messiah. The timing of the last day, manner of the crucifixion and death, location of Golgotha, description of the tomb and its guards are historically accurate and consistent with the time. Whereas His death dashed the hopes of those hoping for the redemption of Israel (Luke 24:18-24), it was the singular fact of the resurrection that convinced the disciples that Jesus was truly the Messiah!

4. The Parable of the Sower (learn more at: [www. Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/ParableKOGSower.aspx](http://www.Helpmewithbiblestudy.org/2JesusChrist/ParableKOGSower.aspx)). A hermeneutic note: when a parable is mentioned more than once, in this case in three gospel accounts, it is significant. Take the time to compare each account to fully learn and understand the parable.

What does the fourth type of soil, the "good" soil, represent?

Matthew 13:23

23) And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who **hears the word and understands it**; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

Mark 4:20

20) And those are the ones on whom seed was sown on the good soil; and they **hear the word and accept it** and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold."

Luke 8:15

15) But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have **heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast**, and bear fruit with perseverance.

The good soil represents the ideal hearer. This person hears the word, understands it (Matt), accepts it (Mark), holds it fast (Luke) and bears fruit.

In contrast to the hearer who is unresponsive to the gospel and message of the kingdom (soil by the path), the ideal hearer receives the good news; he is not hard.

In contrast to the hearer who receives the gospel but has very shallow belief (soil on rocky places), the ideal hearer understands the gospel and allows the message of the kingdom to take root; he is not shallow.

In contrast to the hearer with consuming worldly interests (soil with thorny plants), the ideal hearer holds fast to the priority of the gospel and kingdom; he is not preoccupied.

Jesus wants children, because, at that age, they have the highest chance of being good soil.

And to enter the Kingdom of God, Jesus focused on the gospel.