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Your Guilt Is Taken Away and Your Sin Atoned For 6: 6-7

Your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for **DIG**: Sacrificial animals were burned on the bronze altar in the courtyard of the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, as a substitute for the death of the sinner. What is the significance of Isaiah's lips being touched with a coal from this altar? Why was Isaiah's mouth touched? What does circumcision of the heart mean (Romans 2:29)?

REFLECT: What is the difference between head knowledge affirming that your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for, and emotionally experiencing it? Which is more consistent? In which of these two areas does Satan attack your belief about your salvation? Head knowledge or feelings? Where does faith come in? Has your heart been circumcised?



Realizing **his** sinful condition, **Isaiah** was cleansed by **ADONAI**, through the ministry of **one of the seraphs**, who **flew to him with a live coal in his hand**. **He had taken the burning coal with the tongs from the altar**. **The fiery coal from the hand of the fiery seraph touched Isaiah's lips**. This was **the bronze altar** seen in the courtyard of both the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and then the Temple in Yerushalayim (see the commentary on **Exodus, to see link click Fa - Build an Altar of Acacia Wood Overlaid with Bronze**). **With it he touched the prophets mouth and said: See, this has touched your lips, now your**

guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for (6:6-7).

Fire is a symbol of **the LORD's** judgment throughout the Bible. We see this from the burning sulfur raining down on Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 19:24**), to death and Sh'ol being thrown into **the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14)**. Realizing **his** impurity, **Isaiah** was cleansed by **God** with the help **of one of the seraphs**. **Seraphs** mean, *to burn*, so even **God's** ministers were flames of **fire**. This, then, speaks of the depth of **the LORD's** grace in relation to this **fire**. **Isaiah** does not plead for mercy, nor does **he** make great promises if **YHVH** would only deliver **him**. All of the evidence makes it appear that **the prophet** considered **his** case hopeless. Yet out of the smoke came **a seraph** with a purifying hot burning **coal from the altar**. **ADONAI** does not reveal **Himself** to destroy us, but rather to redeem us (so it was with Jacob in **Genesis 32**, and with **the Israelites in Exodus 19** through **24**).

This symbolic action **atoned for Isaiah's sin**. There is, of course, nothing in **the** burning **coal** itself that can deal with a **sinful** heart. In the same way, the bread and the wine of communion do not take away **sin**. **The altar** is a place of sacrifice because blood is the means of sacrifice. **In fact, according to the Torah, nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22 CJB)**. **The seraph** touched **Isaiah's lips** because that is where **he** was most conscious of **his** sin. Remember **he** said: **For I am a man of unclean lips**. As a result, **his guilt** was taken away, and **his sin** was covered. **The fire on the altar was heavenly and holy, and as such burned away, so to speak, the impurities of sin**. But this was as far as it went. Until **Messiah** died, the **sin** of the righteous of the TaNaKh could not be removed, only covered.

Of course, this is what the entire nation needed. Judah needed to respond as **Isaiah** did, admitting their need of cleansing from sin. But unlike **the prophet**, most members of Judah refused to admit they had a spiritual need. Through the priests, they burned sacrifices at the Temple, but their lives needed the purifying action of **God's** cleansing through **fire**.¹⁸

What causes this **sin** and wickedness in the human heart? It is that arrogant self-sufficiency that refuses to acknowledge **Yeshua** as **Lord** and **Savior**. First, we inherited our sin nature from Adam. Paul tells us that **just as sin entered the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and in this way death came to all mankind, because all have sinned (Romans 5:12)**. But

secondly, we also inherit an arrogant self-sufficiency that refuses to **bow the knee and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Philippians 2:20-11)**. This is the ultimate uncleanness of which **Isaiah** had been accusing **his** people, and then, much to **his** chagrin, **he** had found that it had taken up residence within **him** also! What **Isaiah** learned then, and we need to learn today, is that apart from **the fires** of self-surrender and divine surgery (**Acts 2:1-4**), having a **circumcised heart** is impossible.

As Moshe had said: **Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer (Deuteronomy 10:6)**. Jews were circumcised (see my commentary on **Genesis En - For Generations to Come Every Male Among You Must Be Circumcised**). In fact, one could not be a Jew and be uncircumcised. So even when a Gentile converted to Judaism they were circumcised. It was part of the Covenant **God** made with Abraham. This was done in a ritual usually performed at a ceremony called *brit milah* when a baby boy is eight days old. The ritual established a covenant between **YHVH** and the individual. It was part of **their** identity as **God's** own **people**.

This passage, however, instructs **ADONAI's** people not merely to **circumcise** the flesh, but to **circumcise** their **hearts**. This means a couple of things. First, it means being a child of **God**, being part of **God's** covenant, is more than the way we appear outwardly. It means that it isn't good enough to just change the flesh; we must change our attitudes, our hearts, from the inside out. If we are to love those who are the least, the last, the little and the lost, we must change our hearts towards **them**. We can't **be stiff-necked**, as it says in **Deuteronomy**. We can't be cold, distant, or hardheaded toward those who need our love and care. We must change our hearts. **For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Messiah Yeshua, and have no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3)**.