


Soteriology 101

Week 3 – Atonement Overview

Connection between the Father’s plan of redemption and Christ’s accomplishment of redemption: Jn. 3:16, Gal. 4:4-5

 **Propitiation:** A sacrifice offered to God to satisfy the demands of His holiness and justice.

“The ark contains the law. The law is regularly, by every human being, every day, broken. The covenant that God has made is violated. God is violated. His holy, just, and good law is violated. So inside the box is the broken law. Above the box is the shekinah glory of God in all His majesty and holiness, accented and enhanced by the presence of the cherubim who are the guardians of that holiness.

How can, then, holy God be reconciled with violators of His law? How can holy God be appeased for the violation of His law? God determined that there would be a mercy seat, a place where appeasement could be made between the broken law and holy God, and it was on that mercy seat that the blood was splattered on the Day of Atonement.

If God was going to forgive sinners and God was going to remove their judgment and deliver them from eternal damnation, He had to be appeased. He had to be satisfied. He had to be placated. Symbolically, God demonstrated the need for that placation with the prescriptions regarding the Ark of the Covenant and the mercy seat.” – John MacArthur

 **Expiation:** The removal of guilt and liability of sin.


Insufficiency of Old Testament sacrifices: Colossians 2:17, Hebrews 10:1-4

“The Day of Atonement temporally and temporarily expiated the nation’s sins, cleansed the sanctuary from the pollution caused by those sins, and removed those sins from the community, so that God accepted their worship. This was not personal salvation, which was always by faith alone (Romans 4:13)” – MacArthur and Mayhue

“Animals are not sufficient to be an adequate substitute for the life of the person who was guilty before God. But they took their value by symbolizing the promised Redeemer who would be the Lamb without blemish, who would give His life as the ultimate sacrifice once and for all.” – R.C. Sproul

Superiority of Christ’s sacrifice: Hebrews 9:11-12, Romans 4:2-3

“This ritual [Day of Atonement] was an acted parable, a copy of what Christ was to do on the great day when He made atonement. The blood of animals is both inappropriate and inadequate to provide the cleansing necessary to approach God. Animal sacrifice could not atone for human sin. Neither could any finite individual atone for sin against the infinite God. Only the blood of the divine image incarnate could cleanse our sin and enable us to enter safely into the presence of God, who is a consuming fire.” – Sinclair Ferguson

 **Christ’s Atonement:** Jesus Christ, as the sinless Lamb of God, willingly and vicariously endured – once for all – on the cross the eternal penalty due to the sins of God’s chosen people, thereby satisfying divine justice, removing God’s wrath toward them, reconciling them to the Father through the purchase of their redemption, delivering them from slavery to sin, and securing for them eternal life and adoption as God’s children.
(1 Peter 3:18, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

1. The **mission** of Christ’s atonement:

- a) It was part of the Father’s eternal plan. (Ephesians 3:11, Acts 2:23, Luke 22:22, Isaiah 53:1-11)

“The atonement wrought by the Son is inextricably rooted in the Father’s purpose to save those whom He has chosen. Thus, in undertaking to pay for sin and provide righteousness, Christ was not ‘going rogue,’ haphazardly embarking on a mission of His own devising. He stated explicitly that He came to do not His own will but the will of the One who sent Him (John 6:38). That is, He was acting strictly in accordance with a specific, agreed-upon plan, devised in the eternal councils of the Trinity.” – MacArthur and Mayhue

b) The Father promised to **reward** Christ. (Isaiah 53:12, Philippians 2:9-11)

c) The Father **gives** specific individuals to the Son on whose behalf He accomplishes redemption.
(John 6:37-39; 10:14-15,29; 17:6)

“God was pleased to set His invincible and everlasting love upon a countless multitude and it is the determinate purpose of this love that the atonement secures.” – John Murray

2. The **cause** of Christ’s atonement:

a) God’s **love**. (John 3:16)

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly that God’s love is the source, not the consequence, of the atonement... God does not love us because Christ died for us; Christ died for us because God loved us. If it is God’s wrath which needed to be propitiated, it is God’s love which did the propitiating.” – John Stott

b) God’s **justice**. (Exodus 34:7, Romans 3:26)

“Failure to emphasize the love of God as the motivation for salvation reduces the atonement to an impersonal transaction or, worse yet, an arbitrary display of vindictiveness and hatred. And yet failure to emphasize the justice of God as that which guides and constrains His love obscures the fullness of God’s character and renders the significance of the cross intelligible, for propitiation – the satisfaction of just wrath – is the pinnacle of God’s expression of love.” – MacArthur and Mayhue

3. The **necessity** of Christ’s atonement: Hebrews 2:10, 17; John 3:14; Matthew 16:21

“In a word, while it was not inherently necessary for God to save, yet, since salvation had been purposed, it was necessary to secure this salvation through a satisfaction that could be rendered only through a substitutionary sacrifice and blood-bought redemption... The more we emphasize the inflexible demands of justice and holiness the more marvelous become the love of God and its provisions.” – John Murray

“It is unthinkable that the Father would unleash the fullness of His righteous fury on His beloved Son, in whom He was well-pleased, unless it was absolutely necessary – unless this price was the only means of securing His desired end.” – MacArthur and Mayhue

 **Christ’s Propitiation:** Through His sacrifice, Christ **satisfied** God’s righteous anger against sin and turned away His wrath from the elect.

 **Christ’s Expiation:** Christ’s sacrifice on the cross **removes** the guilt and liability of sin of the elect.

Take aways

1. Remember God is holy and just and recognize the **necessity** and significance of Christ’s atoning sacrifice.
2. Thank God for His **eternal** plan of providing atonement for sinners.
3. Rest in the **sufficiency** of Christ’s atonement.