

Soteriology 101

Week 4 – Nature of the Atonement, Part 1



Christ's Obedience: Christ's complete **submission** to the Father's will by His **willingness** to endure suffering and death on the cross to accomplish redemption for His elect.

"When we speak of [Christ's] obedience we are thinking not merely of formal acts of accomplishment but also of the disposition, will, determination, and volition which lie back of and are registered in these formal acts."

– John Murray

1. Christ **learned** obedience. (Luke 2:52, Hebrews 5:8)

"[The phrase] 'He learned obedience' means that Jesus moved from untested obedience into suffering, and then through suffering into tested and proven obedience... He learned obedience in what He suffered, and He never, never, never failed once in the process of perfect learning, proven, tested obedience." – John Piper

2. Christ was obedient to the Father's **divine plan**. (John 6:38, 12:49, 10:17-18; Philippians 2:8)

3. Christ's obedience was necessary to be a suitable **substitutionary** sacrifice for sinners. (1 Peter 1:18-19)

"For Christ to have been a fitting substitute to bear the punishment for sin in the place of sinners, He Himself had to be sinless – holy, innocent, undefiled, and separate from sinners." – MacArthur and Mayhue

4. Christ's obedience to the law provided the **righteousness** that is the ground of **justification**. (Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:19; 1 Corinthians 1:30)

"All humanity hangs on either the disobedience of Adam or the obedience of Christ." – Derek Thomas

"It was by obedience He secured our salvation because it was by obedience He wrought the work that secured it." – John Murray



Penal Substitution: Christ suffered the **penalty** for the sins of the elect as a **substitute** for them. (John 1:29, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 3:13)

"On the cross Christ took our place and bore the equivalent punishment for our sins, thereby satisfying the just demands of the law and appeasing God's wrath... The idea of vicarious, penal substitution is imbedded in the warp and woof of Scripture." – Bruce Demarest


Penal substitutionary prepositions:

- a) **For** (1 Peter 3:18, 1 John 2:2)
- b) **Because** of / For the **sake** of (2 Corinthians 8:9)
- c) In **place** of / **Instead** of (Matthew 2:22, 20:28)
- d) On **behalf** of (Luke 22:19, Mark 14:24)

“As the Good Shepherd, Jesus lays down His life on behalf of the sheep (John 10:11, 15; 1 John 3:16), and He died on behalf of us, the ungodly (Rom. 5:6, Rom. 5:8, 1 Thess. 5:10). He gave Himself for His bride, the church (Eph. 5:25), which Paul describes both collectively (Eph. 5:2, Titus 2:14) and personally (Gal. 2:20). On our behalf He was made sin (2 Cor. 5:21), became a curse (Gal. 3:13), and tasted death (Heb. 2:9). The Righteous One suffered the penalty of sin on behalf of the unrighteous so that He might reconcile those sinners to God (1 Pet. 3:18). As the above passages show, there is no more well-attested doctrine in all the New Testament than the vicarious suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of His people.” – MacArthur and Mayhue

Elements of Christ’s penal substitution:

- Sacrifice
- Propitiation
- Reconciliation
- Redemption
- Conquest

 **Sacrifice:** Christ once for all **offered** Himself to die on the cross to pay for the sins of the elect and **expiate** their guilt. (Heb. 9:22; 1 John 3:5; Ex. 12:13; Matt. 26:26-28; 1 Cor. 5:7; Heb. 10:1-4, 9:11-12; Isa. 53:6; 1 Peter 2:24)

“Just as the high priest entered beyond the veil into the Most Holy Place, so also Christ is the Great High Priest who has entered beyond the veil of the heavenly tabernacle, into the very presence of God Himself. And while the high priest sprinkled the blood of the sacrificial goat on the sacrificial goal on the mercy seat to make atonement, the Lord Jesus sprinkled His own blood, and inasmuch as His blood is infinitely more valuable than that of goats and calves, He thus secured an eternal redemption. He is therefore the fulfillment of both the high priest and the sacrifice; He is both offerer and offering, for ‘He offered Himself without blemish to God’ (Hebrews 9:14)” – MacArthur and Mayhue

Christ’s sacrifice:

- a) was offered only **once**. (Hebrews 9:28, 1 Peter 3:18, Romans 6:10)
- b) was **accepted** in heaven. (Hebrews 9:24)
- c) effected **forgiveness**. (Hebrews 9:25-26)
- d) gained **access** to God. (Hebrews 10:19-22; 4:16)

“If Jesus wasn't truly forsaken—if He didn't really endure the equivalent of eternal punishment on the cross—then substitutionary atonement is a legal fiction. If Jesus didn't really suffer the pains of hell on the cross, then the infinite and eternal wrath of God is not truly propitiated. If Jesus didn't become the object of the righteous indignation of God in our place, then we are still the objects of the eternal wrath of God. If Jesus wasn't truly condemned on the cross, then we are not truly justified before God. If Jesus did not objectively suffer the equivalent of hell in His body and soul, then there will be hell for us to pay. Praise God that there was hell to pay for Jesus when ‘in my place, condemned He stood....Hallelujah! What a Savior!’” – Nick Batzig

Take Aways

1. Remember the work of atonement has been completed by Christ. We are called to repent and trust in His completed work.
2. If you have trusted in Christ alone for salvation, you need not feel guilty before God, for He has paid for your sins – past, present, and future.
3. If you have not trusted Christ, your guilt will be removed when you rest in Him alone.