

Unpacking the Gospel

Class 4: The Work of Christ

July 26th, 2023



Introduction

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures." (1 Cor 15:3)

"For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." (1 Cor 2:2)

Atonement is the work of Christ in reconciling God and men.

"Atonement is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation." (Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology pag.705)

"The atonement is the crucial doctrine of the faith. Unless we are right here, it matters not, it seems to me, what we are like elsewhere." (Leon Morris)

There are two aspects of the atonement:

1. Christ's obedience sometimes called active obedience. This refers to Christ's obedience for us, in which He perfectly obeyed the law and was perfectly obedient to the will of the father in our place.
2. Christ's passive obedience. This refers to Jesus' sufferings for us, in which He took the penalty due for our sins and as a result died on our behalf.

I. Christ's Sinless Life: Active Obedience

The love of God is clearly seen in *John 3:16*, where we are told that "God so loved the world that He have his only Son, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

And the justice or the righteousness of God in *Romans 3:25*, "whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins."

Scriptures references in regards of Jesus' sinless life.

"He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:22)

"For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens." (Hebrews 7:26)

"Which one of you convicts me of sin?" (John 8:46)

If humanity were to be saved from this helplessness, only God could take upon himself the work of atonement and earn forgiveness for human race.

"Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." (Hebrews 2:17)

II. Christ's Atoning Death: Passive Obedience

A passage that portrays with unique force the vicarious suffering of the Messiah in the OT is Isaiah 53.

"And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)

"He bore the sin of many." (Isaiah 53:12)

"Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many." (Hebrews 9:26)

And Paul in a striking way tells us in *1 Corinthians 5:21*, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

"Whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins." (Romans 3:25)

Definition of propitiation: "a sacrifice that bears God's wrath to the end and in so doing changes God's wrath toward us into favor." (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* pag.712)

III. Christ's Resurrection: Power Over Death!

"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." (Romans 5:12)

"For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many." (Romans 5:15)

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Cor 15:22)

IV. Christ's Ascension: Ruling and Interceding

"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. (Hebrews 4:14-15)

V. The Work of Christ and the Gospel

1. Our life is hidden in Christ.
2. Christ is the only way to God.

Christ's sacrifice of himself has practical application for us: first it assures that there is no more penalty for sin left for us to pay. Second, the penalty has been paid entirely by Christ, and we should have no fear of condemnation or punishment.

And because Jesus was our substitute in his life and death, the benefits of his work meaning forgiveness of sins and the reward of heaven is ours through faith.