

# Soteriology 101

## Week 6 – Atonement Wrap-Up

### 1. Incomplete theories of the atonement

- a) **ransom** theory: cosmic struggle between God and Satan.
  - ⇒ problem: Christ's sacrifice paid a ransom to **Satan**, and it attributes more **power** and **authority** to Satan than he actually has.
  
- b) **satisfaction** theory: restoration of God's honor.
  - ⇒ problem: Christ's sacrifice offered satisfaction to God's **honor** rather than to His **wrath**.
  
- c) **moral influence** theory: subjective example for believers to follow.
  - ⇒ problem: Christ's sacrifice offers only an **example** of love by which sinners are saved, not a **payment** for the penalty of sin.
  
- d) **governmental** theory: token suffering for sins.
  - ⇒ problem: Christ's sacrifice maintains the **moral order** of the universe, not bearing the full penalty of human sin.

*“There is only one source from which we can derive a proper conception of Christ's atoning work. That source is the Bible. There is only one norm by which our interpretations and formulations are to be tested. That norm is the Bible. The temptation ever lurks near us to prove unfaithful to this one and only criterion. No temptation is more subtle and plausible than the tendency to construe the atonement in terms of our human experience and thus to make our experience the norm.” – John Murray*

### 2. The sufficiency of the atonement

- a) **objective**: a work accomplished **independent** of and **apart** from those who will eventually partake of its benefits. (Ephesians 2:1, Isaiah 43:11)

*“As with the Father's work of election, which depends ‘not of him who wills or runs’ (Romans 9:16), and with the Spirit's work of application, in which He blows where He wishes (John 3:8), so it is with the Son's work of redemption. Salvation is of the Lord (Jonah 2:9), and therefore, it has been perfectly accomplished by Him, two thousand years ago, external to those who will reap its divine blessings.” – MacArthur and Mayhue*

- b) **final**: a **single**, finished, **unrepeatable** work. (Hebrews 7:26-28, 9:11-12, 9:25-28, 10:10-14)

c) **efficacious**: Christ **actually** saved His people. (Matthew 1:21)

*“Our debts are not canceled. They are liquidated.” – John Murray*

*“Christ has done everything necessary to completely secure the salvation of those for whom He died – to render certain and definite the application of salvation’s benefits to all those for whom Christ purchased them... nothing can be added to Christ’s work in order to invest it with power or efficacy.” – MacArthur and Mayhue*

### 3. The extent of the atonement

Two general views:

- **Universalist**: Christ paid for the sins of every person who has ever lived, without exception.
- **Particularist**: Christ died as a substitute for the elect alone.

a) Christ’s atonement demonstrates a perfect **unity** among the persons of the Trinity.

(John 4:34, 6:39, 37, 40, 44, 10:28, 17:9; Matt 20:28; John 10:14-15, 26, 15:13, Acts 20:28, Titus 2:14)

*“It is unthinkable to believe that Christ would say, ‘I recognize, Father, that Your election and Your salvific intentions terminate upon only a portion of mankind, but because My love is more inclusive and expansive than Yours, I am not satisfied to die only for those You have elected. I am going to die for everyone.’” – Robert Reymond*

*“Christ did not win a hypothetical salvation for hypothetical believers, a mere possibility of salvation for any who might possibly believe, but a real salvation for His own chosen people.” – John Murray*

b) Christ’s atonement is actual, not **provisional**. (1 Peter 2:24)

*“God’s saving purpose in the death of His Son was not a mere ineffectual wish, depending for its fulfillment on man’s willingness to believe, so that for all God could do Christ might have died and none been saved at all. ... The Bible sees the cross as revealing God’s power to save, not His impotence. Christ did not win a hypothetical salvation for hypothetical believers, a mere possibility of salvation for any who might possibly believe, but a real salvation for His own chosen people. His precious blood really does save us all; the intended effects of His self-offering do in fact follow, just because the cross was what it was. Its saving power does not depend on faith being added to it; its saving power is such that faith flows from it. The cross secured the full salvation of all for whom Christ died.” – J.I. Packer*

c) Christ’s atonement is for the elect without **distinction**, not for all without **exception**. (Revelation 5:9)

### Takeaways

1. Be committed to a biblical understanding of the atonement.
2. Rest in the sufficiency of Christ’s finished work, not your own merit.
3. If you have trusted in Christ for salvation, you have been chosen by the God of the universe out of His great love and mercy for you, a sinner.