



WHY DO WE BELIEVE *THAT* ? Introduction to Reformed Theology

Class 18

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST, PART 2

Education Year 2024-2025

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Review – ULTIP Part 6 & Atonement

- Canon of Dort, Head 5
- The Atonement of Christ
 - Glossary
 - Essentials
 - Development



Scripture Passages

• Cause of the Atonement

• Genesis 3:15

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

• John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

• Galatians 1:4

...who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father...

• Colossians 1:19-20

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.



Scripture Passages

• Necessity of the Atonement

• Exodus 34:7

...keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.

• Numbers 14:18

The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but he will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation.

• Jeremiah 4:4

...lest my wrath go forth like fire, and burn with none to quench it, because of the evil of your deeds.

• Jeremiah 6:11-12

Therefore I am full of the wrath of the LORD; I am weary of holding it in. "Pour it out upon the children in the street, and upon the gatherings of young men, also; both husband and wife shall be taken, the elderly and the very aged. ...for I will stretch out my hand against the inhabitants of the land," declares the LORD.

• Nahum 1:2-3

The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.



Scripture Passages

- Necessity of the Atonement

- Luke 24:26

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?

- Hebrews 2:10

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

- Hebrews 9:22-23

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. Thus it was necessary for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these rites, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.



Scripture Passages

- Objective Nature of the Atonement

- Romans 3:25-26

...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. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- Romans 5:10

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.

- 2 Corinthians 5:19-21

...that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.



Glossary of Terms w/ Scripture Passages

- **Expiation** – *The removal of guilt*

- Psalm 103:12

...as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.

- **Propitiation** – *The satisfaction of God's wrath*

- Boice Article p. 317-318

- Romans 3:23-24

...and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 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.



Glossary of Terms w/ Scripture Passages

- **Penal** – *Judgment according to the law (of God)*

- Covenant Curses – Leviticus 26; Deut 28

- Deuteronomy 28:63

And as the LORD took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the LORD will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you. And you shall be plucked off the land that you are entering to take possession of it.

- Deuteronomy 29:20

The LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but rather the anger of the LORD and his jealousy will smoke against that man, and the curses written in this book will settle upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven.

- Galatians 3:10, 13

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them." ... "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree" ...



Glossary of Terms w/ Scripture Passages

- **Satisfaction** – *Complete fulfillment of the legal requirement(s)*

- Matthews 5:17-18

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

- John 19:30

When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, "It is finished," and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

- Hebrews 10:14

For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.



Glossary of Terms w/ Scripture Passages

- **Vicarious / Substitution** - *A worthy representative taking the place of another and the other receiving the benefits*

- John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

- Romans 4:25

...who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

- Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us...

- Hebrews 10:4

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.



Glossary of Terms w/ Scripture Passages

- **Imputation** – *A legal term: crediting to one's account. Also, a covering (as with a robe)*

- Isaiah 61:10

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

- Zechariah 3:3-5

Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the LORD was standing by.

- Romans 4:22-25

That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.



Glossary of Terms w/ Scripture Passages

- **Sacrifice** – *A death that atones.*

- Leviticus 16:6

Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house.

- Hebrews 9:11-14

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

- I Peter 2:24

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.



Glossary of Terms w/ Scripture Passages

- **Active Obedience of Christ** – *Christ's perfect, complete, and full obedience to the will and law of God*

- Luke 22:42-44

[Jesus prayed] saying, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

- John 17:4

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.

- Hebrews 5:8

Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.



Glossary of Terms w/ Scripture Passages

- **Passive Obedience of Christ** – *Christ's suffering his entire life, but especially his extreme suffering on the cross*

- John 10:18

"No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

- John 19:16-18

So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.



Isaiah 53:4-12 and the Atonement

- ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.
- ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.
- ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
- ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.
- ⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?
- ⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

- Expiation / Propitiation / Satisfaction
- Penal / Satisfaction / Sacrifice
- Vicarious / Substitution
- Imputation
- Active / Passive Obedience



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Isaiah 53:4-12 and the Atonement

- ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.
- ¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.
- ¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.

- Expiation / Propitiation / Satisfaction
- Penal / Satisfaction / Sacrifice
- Vicarious / Substitution
- Imputation
- Active / Passive Obedience



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Development and Perversions of the Doctrine¹

- Despite the importance of this doctrine for the essence of the Gospel, the church has never been settled, even up to today.
- **Apostolic Fathers** – Used Scriptural terms on the work of Christ. *Epistle to Diognetus*: man's sin deserves punishment, God giving the Son as a ransom for sin, and the resulting covering of sin by the righteousness of Christ.
- **Apologists** – Didn't say much, Christ as a redeemer from the power of the devil.
- **Gnostics** – Christ redeemed from kingdom of darkness (world of matter).
- **Marcion** – Christ's death was the price at which the God of love purchased men from the creator of the world.
- **Irenaeus** – A little bit of deliverance from the power of Satan, but the death of Christ satisfied the justice of God and thus liberates men.

1. Largely from Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 165-199.



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Development and Perversions of the Doctrine

- **Recapitulation Theory** – “re-headshipping”¹ “Christ recapitulates in himself all the stages of human life, and all the experiences of these stages, including those which belong to our state as sinners.”²
- **Clement of Alexandria** – The death of Christ is a payment of man's debt and a ransom; but he gives more prominence to the idea that Christ as Teacher saves men by endowing them with true knowledge and inspiring them to live a life of true love and righteousness.
- **Origen** – see Berkhof, p. 166
 - Horton – *the Ransom Theory* of Origen – The atonement was a ransom paid to Satan
- **Athanasius** – an emphasis on the ethical rather than on the physical element in the process of Christ's incarnation. Christ operates by his word and example on the hearts of men.

1. Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 502.

2. Berkhof, *History*, 165.



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Development and Perversions of the Doctrine

- **Anselm – *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why the God Man*)** – The ultimate necessity of the atonement was for the honor of God, which could only come through punishment (of the entire human race) or satisfaction (through the gift the Son).
 - Come to be known as the *Satisfaction Theory*, see Horton quote, p. 503
- **Abelard** – Rejects much of Anselm. “...since God is love and is quite ready to forgive irrespective of any satisfaction. All he requires is penitence in the sinner; and he is ready and even eager to pardon the penitent.”
 - *The Moral Influence Theory* – “According to this theory, the purpose of Christ’s death was to provide a moving example of God’s love for sinners that would provoke repentance. The image of Christ’s death on the cross demonstrates God’s love in such a powerful way that only the coldest hearts could resist its lure and remain enemies of God.”¹

1. Horton, *The Christian Faith*, 504.



Development and Perversions of the Doctrine

- Other Scholastic theologians of the Medieval Ages bounced around the ideas of Anselm and Abelard, some better than others (from our point of view!).
- **Duns Scotus – *Acceptilation / Acceptation Theory*** – see Berkhof quote, p.180.
- **Reformation** – substantial agreement between the Reformers and Anselm, but some differences too, see Horton, p. 503.
 - Sin is a transgression of the law of God and incurs guilt (*Anselm: an insult on the honor of God*)
 - The atonement is a penal sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God (*Anselm: a superabundant gift to God in vindication of his honor*.)
 - The act of faith that appropriates the righteousness of Christ (*Anselm: exchange between God and Jesus, but nothing for the believer*).



Development and Perversions of the Doctrine

- **Socinus** – see Berkhof, p. 185-186.
- ***Governmental Theory*** – From Arminian Hugo Grotius
 - According to Olson, though, this is not *the* Arminian position since neither, Arminius, Wesley, and many contemporary Arminians don't hold it.
 - See Horton, p. 504, and Olson, p. 224.
- **General Arminian View** (according to Berkhof) – see Berkhof, p. 188-189.
- ***Mystical Theory*** – see Berkhof, p. 198.
- **Protestant Liberalism** – see. Machen, *Christianity & Liberalism*, p. 100.
 - Horton on other theologies and “therapeutic categories” p. 509-510.



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Rome

- Definition of Expiation:
 - The act of redemption and atonement for sin which Christ won for us by the pouring out of his blood on the cross, by his obedient love “even to the end” (Jn 13:1) (433, 616, 1475). The expiation of sins continues in the mystical Body of Christ and the communion of saints by joining our human acts of atonement to the redemptive action of Christ, both in this life and in Purgatory.
- “Treasury of Merit”
 - *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1474-1477



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Rome – Council of Trent^I

- Fourth Session, Canon XXX
 - If any one saith, that, after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened [to him]: let him be anathema.
- Fourteenth Session, Chapters VIII-IX
 - See Schaff, p. 157 & 158
 - Canon IV, Schaff p 164-165
 - Canons XII-XIV, Schaff p. 168-169

1. From Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, Vol. 2



Next Week

- *Ordo Salutis*

