

Christology: The Person and Work of Christ

Lesson 5: The Work of Christ – Atonement, Part 1

Statement of Belief: Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Second Person of the Trinity, lived a perfect life and died a substitutionary death for the redemption of God's people.

Often “atonement” is used only to refer to the work of Christ on the cross, dying and paying for our sins. For the sake of this class, like Wayne Grudem, we will use “atonement” to mean “the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation” (*Systematic Theology*, 568).

Propitiation: a sacrifice that turns away the wrath of God

Expiation: an action that cleanses from sin (includes no concept of appeasing wrath)

Question #1: What was the cause of the atonement?

The love of God John 3:16
The justice of God Romans 3:25-26

Question #2: Was the atonement necessary?

No. God was never required to save anyone from condemnation. He would have been perfectly just to condemn every single person to hell for eternity. We rejected his lordship and refused to worship him. We deserved punishment.

Yes. Though God was not required to save his people, one he decided to save them, it appears necessary based on Scripture that the atonement was the only way that God could save his people.

Matt. 26:39
Luke 24:25-27
Rom. 3:26
Heb. 2:17; 9:23-26; 10:4

Question #3: What was the nature of the atonement?

Christ was obedient for us

- If Jesus only died on the cross for our forgiveness, then we would still not merit heaven. Yes, our sins would be forgiven, but we would have the righteousness required by God (Rom. 8:3-4).
- Without the righteousness God requires, we would only be neutral in our relationship. We would be forgiven but not righteous.
- So, Christ needed to live a perfect life and earn our righteousness for us, since we couldn't earn it for ourselves. This righteousness would then be applied to our account, credited to us, so that we would have positive moral righteousness.
- Romans 5:19; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9

Christ suffered for us

- He suffered throughout his life by living as a man in a fallen world
 - Isaiah 53:3
 - Matthew 4:1-11
 - John 11:35
 - Hebrews 5:8; 12:3-4
- He suffered the pain of the cross
 - Physical pain and death (John 19:31-33)
 - Pain of bearing sin (Isa. 53:6, 12; Jn. 1:29; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24)
 - Abandonment by the disciples (Matt. 26:56) and the Father (Hab. 1:13; Matt. 27:46)
 - Bearing the wrath of God (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 Jn. 2:2; 1 Jn. 4:10)