

Section: Doctrine of Christ (Christology)

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Sam Jones

**TEACHING NOTES <> Lesson 58**

**Q62. What did Christ accomplish by dying on the cross?**

Substitutionary Atonement.

On the cross, Christ fully satisfied God’s divine wrath as the perfect substitute in place of His elect.

**Q69. How was Jesus our sacrifice?**

Jesus is the spotless Lamb who took away our guilt from sin by having taken our place under the wrath of God.

Welcome, excitement for this lesson. Pray.

**Q62. What did Christ accomplish by dying on the cross?**

**Substitutionary Atonement. On the cross, Christ fully satisfied God’s divine wrath as the perfect substitute in place of His elect.**

You can find the answer to this question in two places in the Word of Truth Catechism. First, on page 77 where the Q62 is located, and second, on page 159 which is where the term Substitutionary Atonement is found in the glossary. That said I want to begin by defining some words within the answer to this question:

The first word I will define is substitutionary. I will use the root noun, substitute since the word substitutionary describes what a substitute does in action.

**SUB'STITUTE**, *noun* One person put in the place of another to answer the same purpose. A person may be a *substitute* with full powers to act for another in an office. Representatives in legislation are the substitutes of their constituents. The orthodox creed of Christians is that Christ dies as the *substitute* of sinners.

Next, we will look at the word atonement.

**ATO'NEMENT**, *noun*

Satisfaction or reparation made by giving an equivalent for an injury, or by doing or suffering that which is received in satisfaction for an offense or injury;

Now let’s put it together. A substitute is a person taking the place of another to fulfill a specific purpose in their place. An atonement is to make satisfaction for the offense or of another. So substitutionary atonement means that a person stood in the place of another to make satisfaction for an offense that the first person is responsible for.

In the context of this lesson:

The offense was and is sin.

The offended party that needed to be satisfied was God.

The offending party is Adam and all His descendants.

As we move through the rest of the answer for this question, I will define more terms that will help unpack substitutionary atonement. The reason I am teaching this way is to help you understand that a theological term, like substitutionary atonement, while only two words long, has much more meaning behind it than you can cover with eight syllables. This is part of the blessing of studying theology, we gain a deeper and richer understanding of terms based on understanding what orthodox Christianity has said about these things.

But before we get there let’s look at our question and answer again.

**Q62. What did Christ accomplish by dying on the cross?**

**Substitutionary Atonement. On the cross, Christ fully satisfied God’s divine wrath as the perfect substitute in place of His elect.**

**The Cross**

We have looked at what substitutionary atonement is and now we will look at the cross.

The Cross is the most widely known and popular symbol in the history of the world.

When we see the cross, we are reminded of Jesus; not just of His life but also of His death, specifically death by being hung on a cross, known as crucifixion.

Death by crucifixion was a terrible way to die that was reserved for the worst of the worst.

**In speaking of crucifixion, it was Cicero who declared that Roman citizens should not think of the cross, should not speak of the cross because it was too altogether horrifying for decent Roman citizens to even contemplate or utter.**

You see, death from crucifixion comes from the body suffocating itself. As the muscles weaken and the body sags against the ropes or nails that are holding it up, the crucified person is no longer able to draw breath. It is a slow, agonizing, horrendous death.

Crucifixion is so horrendous that we had to create a word to explain it; that word is **excruciating**.

Today you and I use the word, excruciating, in an effort to describe the most painful, awful, and undesirable of circumstances. Understand tonight, the word, excruciating, literally means “from the cross.”

Perhaps the most peculiar thing about the Cross and the death of Jesus is this simple fact: Christians, including myself, declare this event to be **good news**, the best news we have ever heard. And the question remains to be answered, “**How could this be good news?”**

The word that the Bible uses for good news is **gospel**. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is our gospel. **Our Good News!** We believe it is the greatest news you can or will ever receive.

To understand why it is good news, we must move from the historical facts to the theological understanding and interpretation of those facts. Another we to say it is that we need more than just what we can know through general revelation, that is, what is revealed to us through nature and the events of human history. We need to know what God tells us about these events in His Word, we need His special revelation.

Christ Jesus died. Why is that good news?

The real issue is not simply the historical fact that He died or even how He died but for what and for whom did He die?

Let’s look back at our answer.

**Christ fully satisfied God’s divine wrath as the perfect substitute in place of His elect.**

We are seeing some of the same language we have already discussed. The language of being a substitute. Christ died as a substitute in place of His elect. But why?

The Apostle Paul declares in his New Testament letter to the Corinthians.

**1 Corinthians 15:3**

**For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures.**

So, Christ died for our sins. But what is sin?

**What is sin? Sin is disobeying God; sin is any disobedience in heart or deed to God’s perfect law and commands. -Q33 WotC**

Who has sinned against God?

**“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” -Romans 3:23**

At the fall sin entered the world through our federal head Adam, from that time forward all descendants of Adam, meaning all of mankind inherited his sin guilt. In addition, all of mankind continuously sins which creates more injury or need for satisfaction to God. Theologian RC Sproul calls sin “Cosmic Treason”.

Our sin is utter offense against the perfect and holy God. It is not to render God the honor due Him. To understand the glory and power of the Cross, we must understand the weight and offense of our sin against God.

Our answer also speaks to “God’s divine wrath.” God’s righteous penalty due sin is his divine wrath.

God’s wrath is one of His many attributes, we must have a clear understanding that His wrath is just as perfect as His loving kindness, and His mercy and all of His other attributes. But since we are speaking of His wrath. Let’s look to the historic confession for clarity:

**The 1689 Confession of Faith says, “the wicked, who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, will be thrown into everlasting torments and punished with everlasting destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.”**

**Romans 2:5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.**

And in 2nd Thessalonians we are told how this wrath will be poured out.

**2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.”**

As Christians we need to have a clear view that the right place for all those who sin, meaning everyone, and refuse to repent and believe is Hell (**away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might)**.

Jesus himself was very clear in His own teaching as He describes the judgment to come in Matthew 25 through three parables he shares:

-In the first story the bridegroom returns suddenly, and the women who are not ready for his coming are excluded from the marriage feast (Matt. 25:10).

-In the story of the servants, the master returns to settle his accounts, and the evil, lazy servant is condemned: “Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (v. 30).

-In the final story the king separates the sheep from the goats, sending the wicked “to eternal punishment” and the righteous “to eternal life” (v. 46).

According to Jesus himself, ***There absolutely will be a future day of reckoning and judgment and many will be rightly condemned to hell as the wrath of God will be poured out on them in hell.***

Maybe the worst description of hell is found in…

**Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night,…**

There are many people claiming faith that would argue that God is not a God of wrath, that He is a God of Love and so he would never send anyone to hell.

Church, listen closely, it is because of God’s goodness that He must rightly judge and condemn guilty people to hell. His perfect justice means he must declare the guilty, guilty! And the sentence is death, eternal death. The presupposition that “God is good” is correct, but the conclusion that therefore, because He is good, means He won’t or can’t punish anyone is completely wrong and dangerous.

The Bible proclaims *the righteous sentence for sinners* in **Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death…”**

**Hebrews 10:26-27, “says…if we keep on sinning there is only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”**

**Modern man despises and in many ways rejects acknowledging the idea of God’s wrath.**

But understand with me that this is yet another reality of fallen man’s lostness in sin.

When enslaved to sin mankind does not have a right fear and or respect for the reality of God’s wrath but instead a blind indulgence in sin that only earns more of it.

Understand with me that, what many call freedoms to do what their flesh desires is really a layer of bondage in sin that they simply cannot see, all they do is the wickedness that their flesh craves.

It’s all they know how to do, and they love it.

Church: I pray that we take most seriously the reality of God’s wrath.

That we therefore take so seriously our daily opportunity to witness to those who are in their sin and apart from Christ.

Now with a better clarity of God’s divine wrath towards those who are guilty of sin, we are able to have a better appreciation for what Jesus did for the elect on the cross in our place.

**Martin Luther wrote, “Since all of us, born in sin and God’s enemies, have earned nothing but eternal wrath and hell so that everything we are and can do is damned, and there is no help or way of getting out of this predicament…therefore another man had to step into our place, namely Jesus Christ, God and man, and had to render satisfaction and make payment for sin through his suffering and death.”**

**The 1689 Confession of Faith says that Christ Jesus “experienced the punishment that we deserved and that we should have endured and suffered. He was made sin and a curse for us. He endured extremely heavy sorrows in his soul and extremely painful sufferings in his body. He was crucified…”**

Mankind’s problem is because of our sin; God’s wrath is the righteous penalty for sinful people. The Bible mentions wrath from God more than 600 times. And from the first book to the last page of the Bible, it is emphatically, consistently, repeatedly, and clearly declared that we are **“all”** sinners, God’s perfect wrath is due sinners, and that in the Old Covenant, as a TYPE, the Day of Atonement was required by God as a way to emphasize and point to this reality. **On that day, the High Priest representing all the covenant people would take two goats, and one goat would be slaughtered.**

Blood would be shed. The animal would die. As **Hebrews 9:22 says, “Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.”** The Bible says in **Romans 6:23, “The wages for sin is death.”**

When you sin, your judgment is death. When Adam sinned as our federal head, the judgment was death.

So, as a foreshadowing in the Old Covenant, the animal dies as a substitute in the place of certain sins committed by people at the hands of the High Priest.

**The second goat, called the “scapegoat,” was then sent out into the wilderness.**

Before being sent out into the wilderness, the High Priest would lay hands over that animal, would confess the sins of the people, and then the animal would run away, symbolizing the taking away of those sins!

Matt Kirstine said it this way when he taught through covenant theology:

*“We have shadows in Old Covenant, things that dimly show something, such as the blood atonement the Israelites could make. This was a temporary thing that foreshowed the better and effectual atonement that would come by the shedding of Christ’s blood.* ***Since tenure in the earthly Promised Land was what was in view in the Mosaic Law, offenses against the Old Covenant could be addressed within that covenant and sacrificial system.*** *But concerning true spiritual realities, concerning offenses committed against a Holy God, the sacrifices could do nothing but point ahead to that one true sacrifice: Jesus Christ.”*

The Day of Atonement is all about Jesus! Not only is He our perfect high priest, who does not need to make atonement for His own sin (as all others did), but He is also our sacrificial lamb and our scapegoat. The fact that Jesus died on the Cross for the sins of His people means He came to shed His blood for the remission of our sins, and He is our scapegoat and takes our sins – past, present and future – and causes the record of them—the guilt of them—to be taken from us so that God would remember them no more.

This TRUTH about Jesus is **Good News** to those of us who believe.

And this doctrine of the **atonement** is so important. Even the word itself is important.

Our sin has separated us from God, and atonement is the only means by which we can be at one with the Holy God, who is perfect and righteous, without compromising His holy perfection.

**Atonement** = At the Cross, God was reconciling His people from all tongues, tribes and nations to Himself in Christ, making us one with Him .

**Romans 3:25: God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood--to be received by faith.**

**(NIV)**

**The more detailed theological phrase for this is “Penal Substitutionary Atonement.”**

And as I promised early in the lesson, we are going to look at more terms that will help us understand this.

Wrapped up in the phrase “sacrifice of atonement” are two important words: expiation and propitiation.

Let me define these quickly, as they both are important words to know and understand as they relate to atonement.

Wrapped up in the Atonement of Jesus is two important words: **Propitiation & *Expiation*.**

***1. Propitiation*. The prefix *pro* means “for,” so propitiation satisfies God’s wrath due to the ones Jesus died for because it was taken on by Jesus. Christ stood in our place and took the wrath we deserved. Upon conversion, this work of Christ is made effectual for us, moving us out from under the penalty due us, and into right standing with God.**

**Propitiation-** Jesus satisfies God’s wrath due the elect based on His substitutionary atonement.

***2. Expiation*. The prefix *ex* means “out of” or “from,” so *expiation* is the removing something or taking something away. In biblical terms, it has to do with taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty or the offering of an atonement.**

**Expiation-** Jesus takes away the guilt of the elect based on His substitutionary atonement.

**Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

The wrath of God no longer sits on those who are in Christ.

In this the holiness of God was respected, His justice is satisfied, and we are set free

This is why we SING and worship GOD!

CHRIST ALONE IS THE MEANS TO OUR SALVATION! To fully understand why, look at:

**2 Cor 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. (NASB)**

“**God made Him** (Christ) **who had no sin** (first requirement) **to be sin on our behalf** (die for us: second requirement), (why?) **so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him** (Christ).”

God made Christ who was sinless, to take on our sin our punishment and die for us, in order to credit us His righteousness.

***This is Solus Christus*!** It’s not because of our righteous acts, our good deeds, anything we’ve ever done or could do. The 1689 Confession of Faith agrees: **“We cannot, even by our best works, merit pardon of sin or eternal life from God’s hand, due to the huge disproportion between our works and the glory to come, and the infinite distance between us and God.”**

In light of that, it is by and because of the perfect righteousness of Christ that we are not only saved from the wrath of God but also declared perfect in righteousness in the eyes of God.

**This is a good time to bring in the next question in tonight’s lecture.**

**Q69. How is Jesus our sacrifice?**

**Jesus is the spotless Lamb who took away our guilt from sin by having taken our place under the wrath of God.**

We spent many lessons recently studying covenant theology, where we learned how God gave laws throughout the covenants that he made with man, and also ways to atone if these laws were broken. Basically, God would say do this or don’t do that. Then if man were to sin by not doing what God told them, then God was gracious to provide a way for men to atone for the sin. This was always a sacrifice of some kind. Blood was required to atone for the sin. This was not a salvific atonement; it was a temporary satisfaction that allowed the Israelites a way to continue in God’s Old Covenant promises.

The Old Testament is ripe with examples but let’s look at a few verses that will give us context.

**Leviticus 17:11**

**11For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life.**

**Leviticus 9:1-7**

**1On the eighth day Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel, 2and he said to Aaron, “Take for yourself a bull calf for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering, both without blemish, and offer them before the LORD. 3And say to the people of Israel, ‘Take a male goat for a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, both a year old without blemish, for a burnt offering, 4and an ox and a ram for peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and a grain offering mixed with oil, for today the LORD will appear to you.’” 5And they brought what Moses commanded in front of the tent of meeting, and all the congregation drew near and stood before the LORD. 6And Moses said, “This is the thing that the LORD commanded you to do, that the glory of the LORD may appear to you.” 7Then Moses said to Aaron, “Draw near to the altar and offer your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and for the people, and bring the offering of the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded.”**

In the context of these passages in Leviticus God decreed that in order to atone for the transgression of His laws being broken, the life of an animal would be sacrificed, through the life blood of the animal, the sin was atoned for, there by paying the sin debt and allowing the people to be reconciled to the covenantal blessings. Again, these blessings were for earthly temporary blessings, not eternal, not to pay the debt of mankind for all sin.

However, when we look at the requirements for atonement under the new covenant, the blood of an animal was not sufficient. In order to satisfy the offense to God for all the sin of mankind, it required a much greater sacrifice. One that could bear the full weight of the wrath of our Holy God. The blood of bulls and goats could not pay this sin debt. Look with me at the book of Hebrews for clarity.

**Hebrews 10:1-10**

**1For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. 2Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? 3But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**

**5Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,**

**“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,**

**but a body have you prepared for me;**

**6in burnt offerings and sin offerings**

**you have taken no pleasure.**

**7Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,**

**as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’”**

**8When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), 9then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. 10And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

All throughout the OT, God is making a way for Jesus. The one who would bring grace upon grace.

An Animal would not do. No animal can fully and rightly pay for the sin of sinful man.

No sinner can fully and rightly pay for the sin of sinful man.

Remember the doctrine we learned in recent lessons!

Jesus had to be God and man for the atonement to be successful and count for us.

Only the God Man, only the **“the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us” John 1:14**

Only the God Man, only the one **“who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin “Hebrews 4:15**

Only the Lamb of God

When Peter, another eyewitness of Jesus, described how the lamb of God would take away our sin by using this language He said**, “you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot” 1 Peter 1:18-19**

Jesus is the Spotless Lamb. This is what is required.

We need a spotless lamb, therefore one of us cannot be the lamb.

Only one could do this…

**The Spotless Lamb:**

**1 Peter 2:22-25 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 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. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.**

What is amazing about this passage is the spotless Shepherd came to save His straying sheep.

How did He do this? By becoming a sheep and by willingly being slaughtered in our place!

Let that sink in for a moment.

First, do you see the innocence, the purity, the perfection, the righteousness of Jesus Christ? (vs 22-23)

Now not only did Jesus avoid bad things. Jesus not only committed no sin, deceived nobody, reviled nobody. The things that Jesus did, He did unto the glory of the Father. “He entrusted his life to God.”

This is important because doing the right things for the wrong reasons is also sin.

Let me say that again, doing the right things for the wrong reasons is also sin. We must get this, because many people think that they don’t need Jesus because they are generally good people.

Even many Christians think they are doing fine in life and faith when they simply avoid bad movies, don’t cuss, or chew, or run around with girls who do. But sin is more than avoiding bad things.

Remember:Sin is a matter of our actions and of the heart.

1. Sin is doing the wrong thing (commission) or not doing what you should do ( omission). (disobedience of God’s perfect law).

2. Even deeper, Sin is also doing the right thing(externally) for the wrong reasons (self-salvation or self-exultation).

Jesus never sinned! He was PERFECT!

Not only did He never commit sin.

He did all that he did “entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” All that Jesus did was from the right heart—He did it all for the glory of God! He never sinned by doing what God prohibited and He never sinned by failing to do what God required.

**Jesus was sinless!**

Again, **1 Peter 1:19 describes Jesus as “like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.”**

No imperfections. Jesus is the spotless Lamb. See the spotless Lamb!

See the fact that He is worthy of total pardon from any chastisement because of HIS PERFECTION!

Jesus Christ, God the Son, became the perfect sacrifice for all of mankind’s sin on the cross. This is why the cross is the most recognizable symbol in history. When we see the cross it reminds us of Jesus and specifically of the way he died. For those that believe we see our blood and broken champion hung on criminals cross and we see beauty, we see the only way we could be reconciled with our creator. We see the consummation of God’s plan from before time began and we are reminded that “It is finished.”

**Romans 5:12-21**

**12Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all mene because all sinned— 13for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. 14Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.**

**15But the free gift is not like the trespass. 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. 16And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 17For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.**

**18Therefore, as one trespassf led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousnessg leads to justification and life for all men. 19For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. 20Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**AMEN!!!!**

The final portion of our answer to question 69 refers to a very specific group of people. When the answer says, “that Jesus took our sin debt by taking our place”, the “our” is referring to all those that have their names written in the book of life. The Bible uses the term “elect” to refer to those that will be saved out of every tribe, tongue, and nation.

For any of you that have sat under teaching at Disciples Church for more than a week or two, you will be familiar with this term and as much as I would like to expand on the meaning, the very next lesson will dive into this theological term in depth. So, now you have a sneak peek of what Steve will be teaching us next week, you will want to make sure to be here as it will be an awesome lesson!

Pray with me.