

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive.

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- John 10:14-15 I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.
- Romans 3:24-26 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith, for a demonstration of His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.
- Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.
- 1 Peter 2:24 Who Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that having died to sin, we might live to righteousness; by His WOUNDS YOU WERE HEALED.

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- Heb 2:17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. .
- 1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.
- 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

See “Excursus on the Atonement”

The Atonement

A BRIEF EXCURSUS

The Definition of Atonement

Think: At – one – ment

The atonement is “the aspect of the work of Christ, and particularly his death, that secures the restoration of fellowship between individual believers and God.”

John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue, eds.,
Biblical Doctrine (BD): A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth
(Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017), 924

The Cause of the Atonement

What was the triune God's motivation for the atonement?

- The Love of God
- The Righteousness of God

The Cause of the Atonement

What was the triune God's motivation for the atonement?

“The love of God and the justice of God constitute the twofold cause of the atonement accomplished by the Son. It is his love that moves him to act savingly at all, and it is his justice that ensures he will accomplish salvation in a manner consistent with his holiness. Neither may be overlooked. Failure to emphasize the love of God as the motivation for salvation reduces the atonement to an impersonal transaction or, worse yet, an arbitrary display of vindictiveness and hatred. And yet failure to emphasize the justice of God as that which guides and constrains his love obscures the fullness of God's character and renders the significance of the cross unintelligible, for propitiation—the satisfaction of just wrath—is the pinnacle of God's expression of love (1 John 4:10).”

The Cause of the Atonement

What was the triune God's motivation for the atonement?

“A penal substitutionary understanding of the cross helps us to understand God's love, and to appreciate its intensity and beauty. Scripture magnifies God's love by its refusal to diminish our plight as sinners deserving of God's wrath, and by its uncompromising portrayal of the cross as the place where Christ bore that punishment in the place of his people. If we blunt the sharp edges of the cross, we dull the glittering diamond of God's love.”

Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach,
Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution
(Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 153.

The Necessity of the Atonement

“Ultimately, the love and justice of God that cause the atonement are also the ground of its necessity. The Scriptures indicate that the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ to make propitiation on behalf of sinners is the supreme demonstration of God’s love to man (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 3:16; 4:10). The magnitude of God’s love is manifested by the extraordinary cost that he is willing to absorb in order to accomplish our rescue. Yet it is unthinkable that the Father would unleash the fullness of his righteous fury on his beloved Son, in whom he was well-pleased, unless it was absolutely necessary—unless this price was the only means of securing his desired end.”

The Necessity of the Atonement

“Further, the justice and veracity of God himself require sin to be punished. God has declared that he “will by no means clear the guilty” (Ex. 34:7). God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18), and therefore the fullness of his righteous wrath must be poured out against sin. It is precisely through Christ’s cross that God vindicates his righteousness, for man’s sin is punished in his substitute (Rom. 3:25; Gal. 3:13). God’s unwavering demand of justice required that salvation be accomplished by a propitiatory sacrifice, for in no other way could God be both “just and the justifier” of his people (Rom. 3:26).”

As the people of God, we behold the special brilliance of the infinite glory and worth of Christ’s atonement when we consider that not even almighty God himself could have accomplished our salvation in any other way. If anyone was to enjoy the saving grace and beneficent mercy of the God who saves, the cross of Christ was absolutely necessary.

Characteristics of the Atonement

- The atonement was voluntary – Christ died voluntarily for us
- The atonement was substitutionary – Christ died in our place
- The atonement was propitiatory – Christ died to pay the penalty of our sin in order to satisfy God's righteous anger against our sin
- The atonement was redemptive – Christ died to redeem

The Importance of the Atonement

“There is no more well-attested doctrine in all the New Testament than the vicarious suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of his people. Penal-substitutionary atonement is woven into the fabric of new covenant revelation from beginning to end, for it is the very heart of the gospel message. In free and willing obedience to his Father, the Lord Jesus Christ has stood in the stead of sinners, has died as a sacrifice for their sin and guilt, has propitiated the Father’s wrath toward them, has reconciled them to the God for whom they were created, has redeemed them out of the bondage of sin and death, and has conquered the rule of sin and Satan in their lives. Each of those themes—sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation, redemption, and conquest—is a different facet of Christ’s substitutionary work and deserves further examination.”

We teach that on the basis of the efficacy of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, the believing sinner is freed from the punishment, the penalty, the power, and one day the very presence of sin; and that he is declared righteous, given eternal life, and adopted into the family of God.

- Romans 3:25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith, for a demonstration of His righteousness...
- Romans 5:8-9 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.
- 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died. ¹⁵ And He died for all, so that they who live would no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.
- 1 Peter 2:24 Who Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that having died to sin, we might live to righteousness; by His WOUNDS YOU WERE HEALED.
- 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, *the* righteous for *the* unrighteous, so that He might bring you to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;