

Systematic Theology, Lesson 21: Christology: The Doctrine of Christ, Part 4

1. Life of Christ

- a. From birth till death, Christ “lived a life of perfect obedience to the law of God,” thereby earning righteousness. This is sometimes referred to as Christ’s “active obedience.”
- b. Because of Christ’s “active obedience,” we receive his perfect righteousness credited to us.
 - i. **Rom 5:19:** For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.
 - ii. **1 Cor 1:30:** But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.
 - iii. **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.
- c. Thus, our sins are not only forgiven, but we are legally righteous in God’s eyes!

2. Death of Christ¹

- a. The cause of the atonement: God
 - i. The _____ (or will) of God
 1. **Gal 1:4:** who gave Himself for our sins so that He might rescue us from *this* present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.
 2. **Col 1:19-20a:** For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him [Christ], and through Him [Christ] to reconcile all things to Himself.
 - ii. The love of God

¹ Christ’s death is sometimes referred to as Christ’s “passive obedience.” This term does not mean that Christ was “passive” in his death, but that he “suffered” in obedience, even unto death (cf. Phil 2:8).

1. **John 3:16:** For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.
2. **Rom 5:8:** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

iii. The _____ of God

1. **Rom 3:25-26:** whom God displayed publicly [i.e., Christ] as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was to demonstrate His righteousness [or justice], because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.*

b. The necessity of the atonement

- i. Question: Was the death of Christ necessary or was there another way for God to save sinners?
- ii. Answer: consequent absolute necessity.
 1. It was not “necessary” for God to save anyone. So in this sense the atonement was not “absolutely” necessary.
 2. Yet, when God decreed to save sinners through love, the atonement became a consequence of God’s choice. So in this sense the atonement was “consequentially absolutely necessary.”
- iii. Biblical support:
 1. **Luke 24:25-26:** And He [Jesus] said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?”
 2. **Heb 2:10:** For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.
 3. **Heb 9:22-23:** And according to the Law, *one may almost say*, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood

there is no forgiveness. Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

4. **Heb 10:4**: For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

c. The nature of the atonement

- i. _____ and objective – Jesus death was a historical and objective event.

1. **1 Cor 15:3-4**: For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.
2. All four Gospel record the historical crucifixion (**Matt 27:31-56; Mark 15:20-41; Luke 23:26-49; John 19:16-30**).

- ii. _____ – Jesus death was voluntary not forced.

1. **Matt 26:53**: Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?
2. **John 10:15**: even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.
3. **John 10:17-18**: For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

- iii. _____ – Jesus death bore the penalty for sin, satisfying God's righteousness and justice.

1. **Isa 53:6**: But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.
2. **Gal 3:13**: Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.”

- iv. _____ or substitutionary – Jesus death was a substitution for us. In this way he was a “vicar” (*vicarious*), someone who stands in the place of another.
1. **Rom 5:6:** For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.
 2. **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.
 3. **1 Pet 2:24:** and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.
- v. _____ and final – Jesus death paid “in full” the complete payment for our sins once and for all.
1. **John 19:30:** Therefore when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.
 2. **Heb 9:25-28:** so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.
 3. **Rom 8:1:** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- vi. Propitiatory – Jesus death removed the wrath of God that we deserved because of our sin.
1. **Rom 3:25:** whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith.
 2. **Heb 2:17:** Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren 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.
 3. **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*.

4. **1 John 4:10:** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.
- vii. Reconciliatory – Jesus death reconciled us back into a relationship with the Father.
1. **Rom 5:10:** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.
 2. **2 Cor 5:18:** Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.
 3. **Eph 2:6:** and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.
 4. **Col 1:21-22:** And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.
 5. **1 Pet 3:18:** For Christ also died for sins once for all, *the* just for *the* unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.
- viii. _____ – Jesus death redeemed us out of bondage from sin and Satan.
1. **Mark 10:45:** For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.
 2. **Eph 1:7:** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.
 3. **Col 1:13-14:** For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.
 4. **1 Tim 2:6:** who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony *given* at the proper time.

5. **Titus 2:14:** who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
 6. **1 Pet 1:18-19:** knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.
- ix. Actual and effective – Jesus death actually and effectively propitiated God, reconciled us to God, and redeemed us from sin.
- d. **GCBC Statement of Faith:** Under “God,” subsection “God the Son”:
- (Paragraph 7): We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished the redemption of His elect through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive.