

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Atonement****The Atonement - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/12 11:20**

How about a dicussion of the verious theorties on the Atonement

Re: The Atonement - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/14 13:53

Would you like to start the listing?

Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/14 14:58

Why is it that nearly every church in America holds to a Catholic theory of the Atonement? Does anyone know where so meone teaches a classical or governmental theory?

It seems universal that people are holding to the idea that in Salvation, God the Father required Jesus to literally pay for the sins of the world.

Then in the same breath they say that we need forgiveness!

A few add that we also need to repent!

All attribute salvation to "grace"???

What is going on?

Re: - posted by Nasher (), on: 2003/10/15 5:34

I look at it like this:

Imagine you are in a court of law:

You have been charged with sinning against God.

This is punishable by death.

God sent His Son to pay for all the sins ever committed and ever to be committed.

We then have many human responses to this, e.g.:

1. "I do not believe I have sinned and therefore do not need Christ to pay for my 'sins'" - Result - You have to pay for you r sins yourself, i.e. with death.
2. "I believe I have sinned and need Christ to enable me to do works of grace to be Justified before God" - Result - you a re saying that Christ's sacrifice on the cross was not sufficient to pay for your sins, you therefore want to pay for them yo urself, i.e. with death.
3. "I believe I have sinned and I put all my trust in Christ to pay for my sins" - Result - Justification / atonement etc.

In regards to repentance, to be able to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and to put all your trust in Him alone you have to tur n from your sin (No one can serve two masters - Matthew 6:24), this comes about from the sorrow you feel towards your Sin (Godly sorrow - 2 Corinthians 7:9-10) and it is something that God instigates. A man cannot chose when to repent, he can only chose to repent when God grants it (2 Timothy 2:25).

Remember Jesus was the ransom:

He was the ransom for all:

1 Timothy 2:6
who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

and he was the ransom for many:

Matthew 20:28
just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

This means that His worth is more than enough to pay for every sin ever committed and ever to be committed, but it is only judicially imputed to a person when they believe in Him.

Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/15 9:39

Nasher,

First, you said if I don't accept Christ's payment for my sins, then I would have to pay for them myself. If they are paid for or already, it doesn't matter what I do. Does God require double payment?

Second, some may believe that Christ's death was not SUFFICIENT to pay for sins and therefore more grace must be accomplished, however, my question is was the death of Jesus DESIGNED to pay for sin?

Third, nowhere in the Bible does it say that one must "put all my trust in Christ to pay for my sins"

How is it that if Jesus literally paid for sins, that he was able to "pay" for everyone? Who required such payment? Whom did he pay?

Thinking out loud,

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/15 10:48

Rom 3:25 whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; (ASV)
Rom 3:25 God has appointed him as the means of propitiation, a propitiation accomplished by the shedding of his blood, to be received and made effective in ourselves by faith. (Philips Paraphrase)

Propitiation is the price paid to remove the cause of the offence with a view to reconciliation. Strictly speaking Christ did not pay the price; He was the price paid. In Romans above, Paul states that God has provided the price for sins done aforetime i.e. pre-Calvary sins. (the argument holds good for all post-Calvary sins too) The benefits of this provision are "through faith". They are not imposed by God upon the whole of mankind; this would be an abnegation of God's own purpose that we must be held responsible for our own choices.

Have you ever noticed the sudden switch in personal pronouns in Isaiah 53:10 "Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when THOU shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand." It is all "He" and "him" and then suddenly "when THOU shalt make His soul an offering for sin". Literally, "when thou shalt make His soul a trespass-offering" something is triggered which fulfils the purpose of God.

A brief look at the pattern of the trespass-offering may help.

Lev 6:6,7 And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto Jehovah, a ram without blemish out of the flock, according to thy estimation, for a trespass-offering, unto the priest:
and the priest shall make atonement for him before Jehovah; and he shall be forgiven concerning whatsoever he doeth so as to be guilty thereby.

God has provided the trespass-offering, but I must bring Him... Forgiveness, through total dependence on God's propitiatory sacrifice, is without my contribution but not without my cooperation.

Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2003/10/15 14:14

Quote:
-----How is it that if Jesus literally paid for sins, that he was able to ?pay? for everyone? Who required such payment? Whom did he pay ?

Here is my limited understanding of the issue.

God's moral law requires payment. The letter of that moral law absolutely requires death for those who trespass its precepts, regardless of atonement or repentance. The spirit of the law allows that under certain conditions death is not necessary.

Either the soul that sins must die, according to the letter of the law, or a substitute must be provided in accordance with the spirit of the law.

The promises of the gospel clearly invite **all** men to receive the atonement that has been provided. This makes it clear that the atonement of Christ is sufficient for all. The reasoning of God with man throughout Scripture so as to warn him of the implications of not accepting the invitation make it clear that revelation of this truth unto repentance and a return to obedience will satisfy the spirit of the law.

In Christ,

Ron

Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/15 15:16

Ron,

Is it true that moral law requires payment? The moral law simply declares what is right and wrong. Justice, both public and private, may need satisfaction in order to uphold the common good. In simpler words the penalty for violation of the moral law is what provides for the safety and security of God's moral creation.

However, how satisfaction is made is what I am trying to get to the bottom of.

Now it is true that God has said that the "soul that sinneth, it shall surely die". However, and to our great fortune, God has provided a way by which the "soul that sinneth, it shall surely live"! Hallelujah!

Now, how is this made possible. Was the death of Jesus the "satisfaction" of the justice the penalty of law demanded, or was the death of Jesus a substitution for the penalty itself. Can it be said that Jesus suffered the penalty of the law. What is the penalty of the law, eternal punishment! Did Jesus suffer such punishment. No, of course not.

What is the answer then?

Thinking out loud,

Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/15 15:28

Philologos,

Excellent remarks on the atonement. I agree that "Christ did not pay the price" as you said and that He, in fact is the price!

My concern is that of the literalness of such "price". We talk about the trespass-offering. A poor family good get by without a lamb, offering a turtle dove, or even a wheat offering. Certainly the offering was to represent the faith we had in God and not in the means by which we were atoned. Nothing can compare with the great sacrifice of the Lord, yet in itself

the death of Jesus saves none. But as you said, is forward looking to "a view to reconciliation". Of course, not to undermine the significance of the death of Jesus, but recognizing its aim and necessity of meeting God's primary condition of forgiveness, that is, the atonement itself.

Thinking out loud,

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/15 18:58

Quote: "What is the penalty of the law, eternal punishment! Did Jesus suffer such punishment. No, of course not."

Finite souls suffer eternal loss for an eternity. The infinite Son of God suffered eternal loss in a moment. It was through the 'eternal Spirit' that He offered Himself to God. Calvary is forever. This is what the old hymn means when it says "the blood shall never lose its power". It is what John saw 60 years after the time/space event when he saw a "lamb, having been slain, standing". In the Spirit, Calvary is now. Eternal is not a measurement of time, but an adjective of quality. The main point about eternal life is not that it is quantitatively better, but qualitatively so. Yes, He spent an eternity on that cross, and was separated for an eternity as He bore our sin/s.

Re: - posted by Nasher (), on: 2003/10/16 4:55

Thanks Philologos, I keep forgetting that Christ didn't pay for sins, he was the payment for sins, thanks for reminding me/us.

I should have known better, I've listened to your sermon 'Propitiation' less than a week ago!

Mark.

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/19 13:34

If some of the terms in this thread have left you cold see the book recommendation at http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=586&forum=41&0

Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/25 21:46

How is it that you say that Jesus suffered eternal punishment in the process of the atonement. Where did Paul teach this? Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice for sin, not as some sort of divine equivalence. If Jesus literally paid or otherwise satisfied the wrath of a vengeful God, where does forgiveness come in. We do NOT need to be forgiven if our debt was literally satisfied.

In other words, if you owe me \$100 and someone comes pays the debt for you, you do NOT owe me anything. It is pointless to say that you must then ask to be forgiven.

Jesus did not suffer the penalty of the law, which is eternal punishment, neither finite nor infinite, rather His death was a substitute FOR the penalty. Whereby those, who by repentance and faith and in following the Lord by death to self can be treated as if we had not sinned.

Thinking out loud!

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/27 6:31

Hi aphil

Strictly speaking 'sinners' are forgiven, 'sins' are remitted. The KJV does not distinguish between these two concepts but the distinction is important. There is a similar need to distinguish between 'expiation' and 'propitiation'. The RSV offended many conservative bible students by substituting the word 'expiation' for the KJV word 'propitiation'. (Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10) The difference is that 'sins' are expiated but the offended party is 'propitiated'. The liberal theology behind the RSV was uncomfortable with an 'angry God'; they thought it was a pagan concept and out of sync with the 'God is love' of the NT.

The biblical facts are that the OT teaching of atonement is that someone is angry and needs to be 'appeased'. See Gen 32:20 "I will appease (lit cover/atone) him with the present... peradventure he will accept my face") In such passages God taught Israel that angry offended parties could be 'propitiated'. This is what the word means; the price paid to remove the offence. It is the basis of all heathen sacrifice; mankind knows that offended deity may be propitiated. However, only biblical revelation makes it clear that the cost of propitiating God is beyond human resources. This is why Paul writes that God has put His Son in place as a propitiation (not expiation!). God's wrath is spent on His Son. Spurgeon said 'it was as though God unsheathed the sword of His righteous anger against sin and sheathed it once and forever in the body of His Son' (candy cotton? Jason? ;-))

This truth was captured prophetically in such places as Isaiah 12 'in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou was angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me'. According to Isaiah this is the day when the LORD becomes 'my salvation'.

'Turning away God's anger' is the goal of Christ's death as a propitiation.

There is another aspect to this which should be examined, namely the forensic nature of Paul's theology in Romans. Courts of law have no interest in 'forgiveness', only in guilt, exoneration, and sentence. This is why Paul never mentions 'forgiveness' in Romans. (Rom 4:7 should read 'remitted'.) More on this later..

Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/27 9:17

I agree that God is angry with the wicked. That His wrath has been kindled, however, the death of Jesus was carried out by the hands of men. The "chastisement that brought us peace" was inflicted by us. Granted this was within the plan of God, He no doubt allowed it to happen. Therefore it was the Father's hand.

But why did He cause Jesus to suffer? What do we call a person that requires a price to be paid in order for you to be safe...uh a mobster, bully, tyrant! It was OUR sins that nail Jesus to the cross. Again, if all of God's wrath is spent on the Lord Jesus, why do sinners still go to hell (because of their sin I add).

Of course, Calvin solved this dilemma with his theory of a limited atonement. Nonetheless, most people see the Bible teaches Jesus's death was for everyone.

By the way sinners need forgiveness because they have sinned. Once forgiven their sins are remembered no more.

I submit to you that if sin was a debt, Jesus is our payment, if sin is a sickness, Jesus is our healer.

As for propitiation, God as a loving Father has no problem forgiving sin. God as a moral governor must regard the whole of the moral creation in providing pardon for sin. The death of Jesus meets the demands of the law in relation to the sinner, whereby through repentance and faith and strict obedience to the life and teaching of the Lord, peace is secured and God is "propitiated".

Look at Daniel when he was sent to the lions den, King Darius "laboured till the setting of the sun how he might deliver Daniel" but found no way. Darius knew that Daniel had violated the law, punishable by the lion's den, but did not want to send him there. However, if he did not everyone would think he was a fickle King. So in order that the law would be upheld and the public order maintained, Daniel was sent to the lion's den.

The same is true of the atonement. God the Father needed no blood! We did! Do you think those little lambs that were slaughtered in the temple brought pleasure to God or appeasement? No, those little lambs showed us how that sin, our sin, causes innocence to suffer. None more innocent the Lamb of God!

Thinking aloud

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/27 12:31

Your quote: "But why did He cause Jesus to suffer? What do we call a person that requires a price to be paid in order for you to be safe...uh a mobster, bully, tyrant! It was OUR sins that nail Jesus to the cross."

1. In the death of Christ man's culpability is absolute, however that is not the whole story. While in the upper room, and immediately prior to the events of Gethsemane, the Lord quoted Zechariah 13 "I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." The OT version has "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones." Who is speaking when he says "I will smite the Shepherd"? The words of Jesus and the full quotation from Zechariah make it clear that it is Jehovah. The horror that broke upon the Lord in Gethsemane was not only that the

time had come to be Sin-Bearer but that His Father was wielding the sword. "I will smite". It was God who 'placed him as a propitiation'. This was prophesied earlier in Isaiah 53:4-5. "we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgression, he was bruised for our iniquities... Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." He is not the Lamb of the world but the Lamb of God. God provided him; God will provide himself a lamb. (Gen 22:8) On the cross Christ was God-smitten.

2. To return to your theme of God's gracious forgiveness making punishment unnecessary. We need to keep in mind the different backgrounds used in scripture to convey truth. From the slave-market we get redemption, freedom, purchased possessions etc. From the temple background we get lambs and sacrifices for sin and atonement etc. From the law-court we get accusation, justification, condemnation, From relationships we get propitiation, reconciliation etc. The background to Romans is forensic i.e. law. Paul's case is not only to accuse man but to exonerate God. That is why he culminates one section of his argument by saying that God had done what He had and part of the declaration was so that God could be 'just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus'. Why should Paul, in the Spirit's inspiration, feel the need to exonerate God if God could simply magnanimously forgive, and why limit it to those who believe in Jesus? Why not forgive everybody? Your answer, I guess, will be the governmental 'cosmic morality' theory. This is sheer speculation with not a verse to commend it, as far as I know. You have complained of 'philosophy' but this is just that.

3. Let me tell you a short story. I have 7 children. When they were younger we took them to an exhibition which had a turnstile which the attendant operated when the entrance fee was paid. I stood in the queue in the middle of my family and the attendant allowed 4 of my children access without them paying a single coin. Why? Because they saw ME coming with the price in my hand! Paul is asking how God could be just in not pursuing past sins. God has always dealt graciously on the basis the price that would be paid at Calvary. His answer is propitiation; propitiation always has a person as its goal.

Re: - posted by aphil777 (), on: 2003/10/27 13:09

I don't disagree that the crucifixion was part of the plan of God for the redemption of His people.

Consider this parable,

Mathew 23:23-35

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses

This sums up my position on the atonement!

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2003/10/28 4:00

hi aPhill

your quote "This sums up my position on the atonement!"

It sums up one of my positions on the atonement too, but there are many facets of this truth. However, in the parable of the 'wicked servant' we can ask ourselves 'who ended up with the debt'? The 'gracious lord' (a better name for this parable) was left holding the debt. He 'suffered' the consequences of the debt.

The other thing to note about this parable is that it is not in a forensic context. There are many symbols of Christ, e.g. Priest, King, Door, Bread, Vine, Propitiation (the price paid). As Isaac Watts said in his hymn you can join all these 'names' together and they are still inadequate to describe Him. I do not deny that the penalty inflicted on Christ may be instrumental in securing the moral fabric of divine government. But this is a subordinate purpose and not the main purpose.

The foundational purpose of Christ's atonement is penal substitution. In Christ His wrath was turned away. He was made Sin, He became the curse. Divine justice was 'satisfied', not because God is a 'mobster' but because His love is Holy love. You ask 'why it isn't immediately effective in all men?' Simply, because all men are not 'in Christ'. The whole world is either in Adam or Christ; In Adam all die, In Christ shall all be made alive. I am not a believer in particular redemption so I believe the offer is open to all, but is effective only for those who are 'in Christ'.