2016 Fall Semester

Foundations

# Redemption Accomplished (work of christ/Atonement)

## Atonement – “The atonement is the work that Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.”

## Entire Work is Usually Divided into Two Stages

### Humiliation of Christ

#### Philippians 2:5-11 – “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

### Exaltation of Christ

#### Resurrection

#### Ascension

#### Second Coming

## Atonement is Usually Seen from Two Perspectives

### Active Obedience – Christ’s obedience to the full law on our behalf

### Passive Obedience – Christ’s suffering for us on our behalf

#### Passive comes from Passion which means suffering

### This formula is used to emphasize the two aspects of Christ’s atonement for us as was required by the law of God. God’s law required two things:

#### Prohibitions – “Thou shalt not…” – “Don’t do this”

#### Demands – “Thou shalt…” – “Do this”

### These aren’t two different stages of Christ’s work of atonement, they are only two perspectives.

## The Active Obedience of Christ

### So we understand that the law requires that we not only be guilt-free, but that we be inherently righteous. And this righteousness is something that we have to earn. We obviously can’t do this and this is why Christ’s obedience for us on our behalf is so important to understand. It’s absolutely crucial. A lot of Christians only concentrate on the death of Christ as if that was all that Jesus did for them, but that’s certainly not the case.

### If Christ had only died for us and not also fulfilled the law for us, then we would only be morally neutral before God: nothing to condemn, but also nothing to commend. Nothing to punish, but also nothing to reward.

### For this reason, Christ had to live a life of perfect obedience to God in order to earn righteousness for us. He had to obey the law for His whole life on our behalf so that the positive merits of his perfect obedience would be counted for us.

### “and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith” – Philippians 3:9

### We don’t need to be made morally neutral before God, having only our sins forgiven, but we need to possess a righteousness that gives us a *positive* standing before God, a perfect life lived. Christ gives us this positive standing before God.

### Matthew 3:15 – “But Jesus answered him, ‘Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then he consented.”

### Jesus wasn’t living a perfect life for his own sake. It was for us. He was fulfilling the law on our behalf. If the law said “you must not do this” then Jesus didn’t do it. If the law said “you must do this”, then Jesus did it, which is why he was baptized.

### Romans 8:3-4 – “For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man, as an offering for sin. He thus condemned sin in the flesh, *so that the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not live according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”*

### This very thing is seen in Romans 5:19, a verse we’ve seen many times: “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”

### 1 Corinthians 1:30 – “And because of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption.”

### Implications of this are obvious, numerous, and we’ve touched on them pretty much already. Jesus had to “fulfill all righteousness” for our sake; that is, for the sake of the people whom he was representing as their head. Unless he had done this for us, we would have no record of obedience by which we would merit God’s favor and merit eternal life with him.

### Because God’s law stated that those who fulfilled the law would receive blessing, so also we are now counted as having fulfilled that law and are entitled to the blessings of God.

#### 2 Corinthians 1:18-20 – “But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not “Yes” and “No.” For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas and Timothy—was not “Yes” and “No,” but in him it has always been “Yes.” For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.”

### Fulfilment of God’s law brings blessing. But God’s law also states that transgressing his law brings a curse. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” – Galatians 3:13

## The Passive Obedience of Christ

### Re-Emphasize

#### I want to reemphasize again the unified nature of Christ’s obedience. Christ didn’t merely achieve his “active obedience” from birth until the cross and then at the cross stop being actively obedient and start being passively obedient. Remember these are two perspectives of Christ’s obedience that we distinguish in order to show the two different aspects of God’s law that Christ fulfilled for us.

#### And again, we must not understand Christ’s passive obedience as meaning that Christ just sat back and let this happen to him or that He wasn’t actively involved in it. Remember Jesus said that “no one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have the power to lay my life down and I have the power to take it up again.”

### Suffering for His whole life

#### Though Christ’s suffering culminated in his crucifixion and death on the cross, it’s important to know that his whole life in a fallen world involved suffering.

##### Possibility he grew up without a father.

##### His temptation in the wilderness wearied him so much that angels had to come and minister to him.

##### He knew suffering in the intense opposition that he faced from people throughout his ministry:

###### Hebrews 12:3-4 – “Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you will not grow weary or fainthearted, for in your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

##### He wept at the death of Lazarus. He experienced grief at Jerusalem’s rejection of him.

##### But all of this was to be expected, because the prophecy of the Messiah in Isaiah 53 tells us that He would be “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

### The Pain of the Cross

#### The sufferings of Jesus intensified as he drew nearer to the cross. Jesus knew what was coming and the closer it got the more it weighed on his soul. Remember in Matthew 26:38 Jesus confessed to His disciples, “my soul is sorrowful, even unto death.”

#### The bible teaches that there were four different aspects of the pain that Jesus experienced.

##### Physical Pain and Death

###### Mark 15:24 – “And they crucified him.”

###### A criminal who was crucified was essentially forced to inflict upon himself a very slow death by suffocation. When the criminal’s arms were outstretched and fastened by nails to the cross, he had to support most of the weight of his body with his arms. The chest cavity would be pulled upward and outward, making it difficult to exhale in order to be able to draw a fresh breath. But when the victim’s longing for oxygen became unbearable, he would have to push himself up with his feet, thus giving more natural support to the weight of his body, releasing some of the weight from his arms, and enabling his chest cavity to contract more normally. By pushing himself upward in this way the criminal could fend off suffocation, but it was extremely painful because it required putting the body’s weight on the nails holding the feet, and bending the elbows and pulling upward on the nails driven through the wrists. The criminal’s back, which had been torn open repeatedly by a previous flogging, would scrape against the wooden cross with each breath.

###### A physician writing in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 1986 explained the pain that would have been experienced in death by crucifixion:

Adequate exhalation required lifting the body by pushing up on the feet and by flexing the elbows … However, this maneuver would place the entire weight of the body on the tarsals and would produce searing pain. Furthermore, flexion of the elbows would cause rotation of the wrists about the iron nails and cause fiery pain along the damaged median nerves … Muscle cramps and paresthesia of the outstretched and uplifted arms would add to the discomfort. As a result, each respiratory effort would become agonizing and tiring and lead eventually to asphyxia.

##### The Pain of Bearing Sin

###### More awful than the pain of physical suffering that Jesus endured was the psychological pain of bearing the guilt for our sin. In our own experience as Christians we know something of the anguish we feel when we know we have sinned. The weight of guilt is heavy on our hearts, and there is a bitter sense of separation from all that is right in the universe, an awareness of something that in a very deep sense ought not to be. In fact, the more we grow in holiness as God’s children, the more intensely we feel this instinctive revulsion against evil.

###### Now Jesus was perfectly holy. He hated sin with his entire being. The thought of evil, of sin, contradicted everything in his character. Far more than we do, Jesus instinctively rebelled against evil. Yet in obedience to the Father, and out of love for us, Jesus took on himself all the sins of those who would someday be saved. Taking on himself all the evil against which his soul rebelled created deep revulsion in the center of his being. All that he hated most deeply was poured out fully upon him.

###### Scripture frequently says that our sins were put on Christ: “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6), and “He *bore the sin* of many” (Isa. 53:12). John the Baptist calls Jesus “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Paul declares that God made Christ “*to be sin*” (2 Cor. 5:21) and that Christ became “a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13). The author of Hebrews says that Christ was “offered once to bear the sins of many” (Heb. 9:28). And Peter says, “He himself *bore our sins* in his body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24).

###### 2 Corinthians 5:21 – “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

##### Abandonment

###### Jesus asked his disciples to stand watch, yet as soon as Jesus was arrested, “all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Matthew 26:56)

###### Now think about this. We can understand this pain to some degree. We’ve all felt the pain of rejection before. We’ve been rejected and forsaken by those close to us and by those we love. But there’s always the sense of “what could I have done differently? What did I do to contribute to this?” But that’s where the analogy ends, because Christ could not have done anything differently and he didn’t do anything to contribute to this pain. There’s a wonderful verse that shows the persevering love of Jesus in John 13:1, it says “having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.”

###### But far worse than the rejection and abandonment of his disciples is the pain of separation that Jesus experienced from the Father. Jesus had always existed with God in eternity past and had always been in a right relationship with him. He always did what was pleasing to the Father and the Father was immeasurably pleased with His Son.

###### Yet on the cross, Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” In that moment, Jesus became our sin. And just as our iniquities have created a separation between us and God, so also our iniquities created a separation between Christ and the Father when they were laid upon him. He was cut off from fellowship with the Father and in that moment, forsaken by his disciples, forsaken by his family, and forsaken by God, Jesus Christ bore the weight and guilt of millions of sin utterly alone.

##### Bearing the Wrath of God

###### Yet more difficult than these three previous aspects of Jesus’ pain was the pain of bearing the wrath of God upon Himself.

###### Romans 3:25 tells us that God put forward Christ as a “*propitiation*” (NAS[[1]](#footnote-1)B) a word that means “a sacrifice that bears God’s wrath to the end and in so doing changes God’s wrath toward us into favor.” Paul tells us that “This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies him who has faith in Jesus” (Rom. 3:25–26). God had not simply forgiven sin and forgotten about the punishment in generations past. He had forgiven sins and stored up his righteous anger against those sins. But at the cross the fury of all that stored-up wrath against sin was unleashed against God’s own Son.

###### At that moment Jesus became the object of the intense hatred of God toward sin.

###### Several other Scriptures speak of Jesus being a propitiation for our sins.

Hebrews 2:17 – “Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

1 John 2:2 – “He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins 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.”

###### Then at last Jesus knew his suffering was nearing completion. He knew he had consciously borne all the wrath of the Father against our sins, for God’s anger had abated and the awful heaviness of sin was being removed. He knew that all that remained was to yield up his spirit to his heavenly Father and die. With a shout of victory Jesus cried out, “It is finished!” (John 19:30). Then with a loud voice he once more cried out, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” (Luke 23:46). And then he voluntarily gave up the life that no one could take from him (John 10:17–18), and he died. As Isaiah had predicted, “he poured out his soul to death” and “bore the sin of many” (Isa. 53:12). God the Father saw “the fruit of the travail of his soul” and was “satisfied” (Isa. 53:11).

### Words describing Christ’s Atonement for us.

#### The atoning work of Christ is a very complex event that has several effects on us. And we’ve only scratched the surface in this class. Entire books have been written over almost every individual point that we’ve covered regarding the atonement.

#### There are four problems that we face as sinners:

##### We deserve to die as the penalty for sin

###### Romans 6:23 – “For the wages of sin is death…”

###### Ezekiel 18:20 – “The soul that sins shall die…”

##### We deserve to bear God’s wrath against sin

###### Romans 1:18 – “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.”

##### We are separated from God by our sins

###### Isaiah 59:2 – “but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”

##### We are in bondage to sin and to the kingdom of Satan

###### John 8:34 – “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.”

###### 2 Timothy 2:25-26 – “Opponents must be corrected with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will.”

#### There are four words that Scripture uses to describe how Jesus Christ has remedied these problems for us

##### We deserve to die as the penalty for sin

###### Sacrifice

Hebrews 9:26 – “He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

Hebrews 10:10 – “And by God’s will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

##### We deserve to bear God’s wrath against sin

###### Propitiation

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.”

##### We are separated from God by our sins

###### Reconciliation

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 – “God through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself.”

##### We are in bondage to sin and the kingdom of Satan

###### Redemption

Because we are in bondage to sin and to Satan, we needed someone to provide redemption and therefore redeem us out of that bondage.

Mark 10:45 – “The Son of man also came not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.”

Hebrews 2:14-15 – “Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.”

Colossians 1:13 – “God has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.”

Romans 6:11, 14 – “So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus…For sin will have no dominion over you since you are not under law but under grace.”

## Jesus certainly paid it all.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)