



Systematic Theology

A study of the major doctrines of Scripture

TOPIC 2 – THE DOCTRINE OF GOD

LESSON 57 – THE TRINITY: JESUS THE SON – HIS ATONING DEATH (PART 3)
BIBLICAL DOCTRINE (JOHN MACARTHUR), PGS. 286-315

Why did Jesus have to die?

- ▶ We have studied how Jesus died, but why did He have to die? The biblical fact is that His death was necessary, determined from before the foundation of the earth, and a necessity for the salvation of sinners.
- ▶ 1 Cor. 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, 2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. 8 Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Christ's Death

- ▶ Acts 26:22 Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said would come— 23 that the Christ would suffer, that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and would proclaim light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.”
- ▶ 1 Peter 1:9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

Christ's Death Foreshadowed

- ▶ Old Testament Sacrifices:
- ▶ Old Testament sacrifices for sin were meant to be an outward demonstration of an inward, vital faith. Without faith, the sacrifices were worthless.
- ▶ Old Testament sacrifices do not save from sin or forgive sins. Animal sacrifices are simply not sufficient to atone for sin fully as only a human life can pay for human sin (Lev. 1:3; Psa. 49:5-9; Gal. 3:10-14; Heb. 10:1-18).
- ▶ Old Testament sacrifices demonstrate the consequences of sin and the effect sin has on one's relationship (fellowship) with God.
- ▶ Old Testament sacrifices require a priest, a prepared and qualified sacrifice (animal), and the need for a covenant relationship with God.

Christ's Death and Sin's Penalty

- ▶ Christ's death was substitutionary (for someone else), penal (bearing the penalty for sin), and satisfactory (satisfied God's wrath).
- ▶ Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant (Heb. 12:24).
- ▶ He is the High Priest in the Order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:10).
- ▶ He is the Spotless Lamb (1 Peter 1:19).
- ▶ His blood cleanses us from sin (Heb. 13:12; 1 John 1:7).
- ▶ He is the only Savior (Acts 4:12).
- ▶ By His sacrifice He has redeemed us and owns us (1 Cor. 6:19-20; 7:23).

The Sufficiency of the Atonement

- ▶ Christ's sacrifice is final – a single, finished work that cannot be repeated (Heb. 7:26-28; 9:11-12, 25-28; 10:10-14).
- ▶ Christ's sacrifice was efficacious – Christ actually saved His people when He died for them. He did not come to make salvation hypothetically possible or merely available, but to actually “save His people from their sin.” He does not make men redeemable, He redeems them.
- ▶ There was no chair in the Tabernacle or Temple! The work of atoning for sin was ongoing and never finished. After Christ died and was raised we are told He ascended and sat down at the right hand of the Throne of God. “It is finished!”

The Extent of the Atonement

- ▶ There exists a chosen group of individuals whom the Father has given the Son, and it is on their behalf that He accomplishes His redemptive work.
- ▶ They are those who will eventually come to Him (John 6:37), and believe in Him (John 6:40) because they have been effectually drawn by the Father (John 6:44, 55-65).
- ▶ They are the sheep for whom the Son laid down His life (John 10:11-15, 27).
- ▶ They are distinct from the world (John 17:9) and have been given by the Father to the Son (John 17:6, 24).
- ▶ He gave His life a ransom for “many” (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45), and came to redeem “His people” (Matt. 1:21).

The Extent of the Atonement

- ▶ Because Scripture reveals (1) that the three persons of the Trinity are entirely united in their saving will and purpose, (2) that atonement is never potential or provisional but always actual and efficacious, (3) that Christ's High Priestly ministry of sacrifice is co-extensive with His High Priestly ministry of intercession, (4) that several passages of Scripture speak of Christ's atoning work in particularistic terms, and (5) that no passage of Scripture teaches that Christ atoned for all without exception, therefore Scripture teaches that the extent of Christ's atonement is not universal but is limited to the elect alone.
- ▶ It is a particular redemption, or definite atonement, meant to accomplish the salvation of the elect.

(MacArthur, pg. 564-565)

For more on the topic of the atonement, listen to this lesson under Topic 1: The Doctrine of Salvation – **Atonement** (<https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=7151821383610>)