

*GraceLife Church Presents . . .*

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# Soteriology

The Accomplishment,  
The Plan, and The Application  
of Redemption

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# The Accomplishment of Redemption

What Did Christ Do To Earn Our Salvation?

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# The Accomplishment of Redemption

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## The Atonement

- ❖ Answers the question, “What does the whole Bible teach us today about what Jesus did to procure our salvation?”

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ Atonement is one of the few theological words that comes from Anglo Saxon.
- ❖ It refers to 'making at one' those who were otherwise separated
- ❖ Literally: At-One-Ment

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

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

Wayne Gruden, *Bible Doctrine*, 248.

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ The doctrine of the atonement, as that which explains what Christ did to earn our salvation, is at the centre of the gospel.
- ❖ The atonement was central in the apostolic preaching of the gospel
  - ❖ Crucially important topic.

**1 Cor 15:1** Now I make known to you, brethren,  
the gospel which I preached to you, which also  
you received, in which also you stand, 2 by which  
also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which  
I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. 3  
For I delivered to you as of first importance what I  
also received, that Christ died for our sins  
according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was  
buried, and that He was raised on the third day  
according to the Scriptures, 5 and that He  
appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ The atonement is vitally important because it is at the heart of the gospel.
- ❖ If we get the atonement wrong we get salvation wrong,
  - ❖ If we get salvation wrong we are lost.



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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ Q: What are the marks of a cult?
  - ❖ A: A wrong view of . . .
    - ❖ Scripture
    - ❖ The Saviour
    - ❖ Salvation

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ Every aspect of the atonement is not equally critical when it comes to a right view of salvation.
- ❖ For example: The question about the extent of the atonement, ‘did Jesus die only for the elect or did he die in some way for all men,’ is not as important as the question, ‘what did Jesus do to make us right with God?’

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ The closer any doctrine is to Scripture, the Saviour (including God), and Salvation the more important it is.
- ❖ A wrong view of the atonement could put you outside the bounds of orthodoxy and therefore render you lost.
- ❖ A right view of the atonement teaches us how God has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ.

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

“If we are going to be fundamentally committed to the gospel, we must devote ourselves to an accurate, robust, biblical understanding of the atonement.”

MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 512.

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ An accurate, robust, biblical understanding of the atonement is not necessarily an easy task for a couple of reasons.
  1. The Scriptures present the atonement from so many different angles; it can be difficult to bring them all together and evaluate their varying significances.
  2. Challenges to this doctrine came late in church history and therefore there are no clearly crafted statements from the early church on this as there are on other doctrines like the Trinity or Christ (historical theology)

“The history of the doctrine of Christ’s work is markedly different from that of the dogmas of the Trinity and Christ’s person. No particular controversy concerning it has led to a clear-cut definition. The truth in Scripture is so many sided in its description of that work that in the history of theology there has emerged an array of views on the work of Christ, all of which contain a core of truth.”

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:340.

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction: Aspects of the Atonement

- ❖ The Cause of the Atonement
- ❖ The Necessity of the Atonement
- ❖ The Nature of the Atonement
  - ❖ Obedience
  - ❖ Penal Substitution
    - ❖ Sacrifice
    - ❖ Propitiation
    - ❖ Redemption
    - ❖ Reconciliation
    - ❖ Conquest
- ❖ Inadequate Theories of the Atonement
  - ❖ The Ransom Theory
  - ❖ The Satisfaction Theory
  - ❖ The Moral Influence Theory
  - ❖ The Governmental Theory
- ❖ The Perfect Sufficiency of the Atonement
- ❖ The Extent of the Atonement

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ All religions have some type of atonement. Some way in which deity and humanity are brought together. Some way in which deity is satisfied, sin (ignorance, imperfection) is expiated, and reconciliation achieved.



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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ Q: What are some the ways in which God and man are brought together in the world religions?
  - ❖ Penance
  - ❖ Good works
  - ❖ Meditation
  - ❖ Enlightenment
  - ❖ Sacrifice / Offerings
  - ❖ Prayer
  - ❖ Giving
  - ❖ Other

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ Christianity is the only religion in which atonement is achieved outside of man.
- ❖ There is nothing man can do to bring God and man together. God must act or we have no hope.

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

- ❖ Atonement is closely tied to other doctrines covered in systematic theology.
- ❖ Q: Of the categories of systematic theology, which ones are related to atonement?
  - ❖ Theology Proper
  - ❖ Christology
  - ❖ Anthropology
  - ❖ Hamartiology
  - ❖ Bibliology

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

“Thought and expression stagger in the presence of the spectacle that confronts us in the vicarious sin-bearing of the Lord of glory. Here we must realize that we are dealing with the mystery of godliness, and eternity will not reach the bottom of it nor exhaust its praise.”

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, xi.

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# The Atonement

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## Introduction

“This is that glory which ravisheth the hearts and satiates the souls of them that believe. For what can they desire more, what is farther needful unto the rest and composure of their souls, than at one view to behold God eternally well pleased in the declaration of his righteousness and the exercise of his mercy, in order unto their salvation?”

John Owen, “The Glory of Christ,” in *The Works of John Owen*, 1:359.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

- ❖ When we ask, “What is the cause of the atonement,” we are asking “What was God’s motivation for the atonement?”

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

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

Wayne Gruden, *Bible Doctrine*, 248.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

- ❖ Often misunderstood, misrepresented, or simply outright rejected.
- ❖ We are going to argue for a penal substitutionary atonement.
- ❖ God the Son paid the penalty for sin by taking upon himself the wrath of God (penal) on behalf of everyone who would ever believe in him (substitution).



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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

“To many, this view of the atonement [penal substitution] pictures the Father as inherently angry and wrathful towards man and as won over only reluctantly by the loving sacrifice of the Son. However this is precisely backward.”

MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 516.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

**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. **17** For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

- ❖ The love of God is the cause of the atonement.
- ❖ The atonement is not the cause of God's love.
- ❖ The love of the Father precedes the sending of the Son.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

**Eph 2:4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

Rom 5:8 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.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

1 John 4:8 . . . for God is love.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

How?

1 John 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in [among] us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 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.

*In what is love?*

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

- ❖ The love of God motivated God to send his Son to save sinners.
- ❖ But God's love is not a general goodwill given to all men making them saveable, or making salvation possible.
- ❖ God in his love sent his Son to actually save sinners.
- ❖ God's love is an electing love.



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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

Eph 2:4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

Eph 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

Gal 2:20 “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

- ❖ God's great love caused him to act to save those whom he had chosen before the foundation of the world.
- ❖ God's justice required that saving action to be fulfilled in the death of his only Son.
- ❖ Justice, then, is also a cause of the atonement.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

- ❖ Once God decided to set his saving love on a certain individuals, he in his wisdom, came up with a way to save them according to his justice, holiness, and righteousness.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

“The wisdom of God has ordained a way for the love of God to deliver us from the wrath of God without compromising the justice of God. . . . The death of Christ is the wisdom of God by which the love of God saves sinners from the wrath of God.”

John Piper, *Desiring God*, 61.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

- ❖ We will talk more about God's justice as we look at the nature of the atonement
- ❖ For now, it is important to understand that God acted out of love to save, and he acted according to his justice.

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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

“Therefore, 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.”

MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 517.



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# The Atonement

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## The Cause of the Atonement

*Why Should we Care?*

- ❖ It makes a big difference if God loves us *because* Jesus died on our behalf or if Jesus died on our behalf *because* God loves us.
- ❖ God's justice, righteousness, holiness, and love are revealed (aspects of his glory) in that he could not/would not simply overlook sin but decided to bear the penalty himself in the person of his son
  - ❖ Remember salvation is ultimately about revealing the glory of God.

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# The Atonement

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## The Necessity of the Atonement

- ❖ When we talk about the necessity of the atonement we are asking,
  - ❖ “Was there another way for our sins to be forgiven?”
  - ❖ “Was it necessary for Jesus to die to earn salvation?”

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# The Atonement

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## The Necessity of the Atonement

- ❖ Everyone admits that the atonement was necessary because God *decreed* to save sinners that way.
- ❖ The question is, “Was it possible for God to save any other way?”

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# The Atonement

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## The Necessity of the Atonement

- ❖ You have been listening to James and I preaching for at least two years, how do you think we would answer that question?
- ❖ (Was it possible for God to save sinners any other way than by sending his Son to die?)

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# The Atonement

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## The Necessity of the Atonement

- ❖ When we talk about the necessity of the atonement we do well to remember that the atonement was not necessary in that it was not necessary for God to save anyone.
- ❖ We are asking if the atonement was necessary once God decided to save sinners.

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# The Atonement

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## The Necessity of the Atonement

- ❖ God was under no obligation to save anyone. That he desired to do so was his own choice free from external pressures.
- ❖ God would have been entirely just to leave us to judgement because of our sin.

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# The Atonement

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## The Necessity of the Atonement

**2 Pet 2:4** For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment;

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# The Atonement

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## The Necessity of the Atonement

- ❖ There are two views. . .
  1. Hypothetical Necessity View of the Atonement
  2. The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement



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# The Necessity of the Atonement

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## The Hypothetical Necessity View

“This view teaches that, based on the sovereign freedom of the God from whom nothing is impossible, he could have chosen to save his people by a means other than the vicarious atonement of Christ. While he ultimately *has* decreed to save by the shedding of Christ’s blood, there is nothing inherent in the nature of God or the nature of forgiveness that makes this absolutely necessary.”

MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 518.

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# The Necessity of the Atonement

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## The Hypothetical Necessity View

*Proponents of this View through History*

- ❖ Athanasius, Augustine, Aquinas, Calvin.

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# The Necessity of the Atonement

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## The Consequent Absolute Necessity View

“In a word, while it was not inherently necessary for God to save, yet, since salvation has been purposed, it was necessary to secure this salvation through a satisfaction that could be rendered only through a substitutionary sacrifice and blood-bought redemption.”

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 6.

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# The Necessity of the Atonement

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## The Consequent Absolute Necessity View

“Therefore, the atonement was not absolutely necessary, but, as a ‘consequence’ of God’s decision to save some human beings, the atonement was absolutely necessary. This is sometimes called the ‘consequent absolute necessity’ view of the atonement.”

Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, 249.

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# The Necessity of the Atonement

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## The Consequent Absolute Necessity View

“However, once God *had* determined to save man, the cross of Christ was, consequently, absolutely necessary.”

MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 518.

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# The Necessity of the Atonement

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## The Consequent Absolute Necessity View

*Proponents of this View through History*

- ❖ Irenaeus, Anselm, John Owen, Francis Turretin, Charles Hodge, A.A. Hodge, Herman Bavinck, Louis Berkof, John Murray, Wayne Grudem, John MacArthur and Richard Mayhue.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *Scripture Declares the Atonement was Necessary for Salvation*

Consistent with the nature of God, sin, and salvation

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 . . . 14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 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.

Why did he *have* to be made like his brethren?

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *Scripture Declares the Atonement was Necessary for Salvation*

**Heb 10:1** For the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near. **2** Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins? **3** But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year. **4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.



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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*Scripture Declares the Atonement was Necessary for Salvation*

- ❖ Neither the Levitical priesthood nor the law could make those who drew near to God that way perfect. Those sacrifices were ‘shadows’ that pointed forward to a better heavenly ‘reality.’

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*Scripture Declares the Atonement was Necessary for Salvation*

**Heb 9:22** And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness

**23** 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.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *Scripture Declares the Atonement was Necessary for Salvation*

“Thus, in relation to sin, God is not just creator or injured party who can cancel the debt and forgive as well as forget the insult but is himself the giver, protector, and avenger of the law, righteousness in person, and as such he cannot forgive sin without atonement (Heb 9:22). In that capacity he cannot nullify the just demands of the law, for we are not speaking about personal or private rights, which one can relinquish, but about the righteousness, that is, the perfections and honor of God himself.”

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:372.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *Man's Condemnation Requires Atonement or Perdition*

- ❖ Unbelieving man stands in a position of condemnation before a holy God and therefore must perish (John 3:17).
- ❖ Jesus says the Son of man must be lifted up in order to deliver man from perishing and grant him eternal life (John 3:14–16).

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *Man's Condemnation Requires Atonement or Perdition*

**John 3:14** As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; **15** so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life. **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. **17** For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. **18** He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

“It is the teaching of Scripture that God as the absolutely righteous and holy one hates sin with divine hatred (Gen 18:25; Exod 20:5; 23:7; Ps 5:6–7; Nah 1:2; Rom 1:18, 32). There is an absolute antithesis between God and sin that necessarily comes to expression in the fact that God reacts against it with all his perfections. . .

Sin cannot exist without eliciting God's hatred and punishment. God cannot deny himself.”

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:371–72.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

**Ps 5:5** The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. **6** You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

**Nah 1:2** A jealous and avenging God is the LORD;  
The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes  
vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves  
wrath for His enemies.



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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

**Exod 34:6** Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; **7** who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.”

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

**Exod 23:7** Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent or the righteous, for I will not  
acquit the guilty.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

**Prov 17:15** He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous, both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

- ❖ God has said concerning himself that he will avenge, judge, and condemn sin, iniquity, and transgressions.
- ❖ He has also said that he will not acquit the guilty.
- ❖ Tied in with the fact that God cannot lie (Num 23:19; Heb 6:18; Titus 1:2) this is a strong argument for the necessity of a vicarious satisfaction.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

“It belongs to our faith in God to avow that he cannot lie and that he cannot deny himself. Such divine ‘cannots’ are his glory and for us to refrain from reckoning with such ‘impossibles’ would be to deny God’s glory and perfection.”

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 7.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

**Matt 26:39** And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will." . . . **42** He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done." . . . **44** And He left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

“Ultimately, the love and justice of God that cause the atonement are also the ground of its necessity. . . Yet 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 security his desired end.”

MacArthur and Mayhue, *Biblical Doctrine*, 519.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

**Rom 3:23** 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. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; **26** 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.

*Notice the atonement words, why did God do this?*

*Why did God want to demonstrate his righteousness?*



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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

The consequent absolute necessity of the atonement brings glory to God because it teaches that God is so holy, just, righteous, and jealousy that he *could* not forgive sin apart from a satisfaction of his holy wrath *and* he is so loving that he sent his only begotten Son to pay that penalty on our behalf thus revealing the fullness of his mercy, wrath, wisdom, and other perfections so that we might enjoy him forever.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

“The more we emphasize the inflexible demands of justice and holiness the more marvellous become the love of God and its provisions.”

John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 13.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Justice Requires a Penalty for Sin*

“Nor was it consistent with the righteousness, or holiness, or truth of God, that sin should go unpunished. Wherefore there was a necessity, upon a supposition of God's decree to save his church, of a *translation of punishment*,—namely, from them who had deserved it, and could not bear it, unto one who had not deserved it, but could bear it. A supposition of this translation of punishment by divine dispensation is the foundation of Christian religion, yea, of all supernatural revelation contained in the Scripture.”

John Owen, “The Glory of Christ,” in *The Works of John Owen*, 1:353.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Actions, Freedom, and Nature*

“The will in God is neither a formal arbitrariness divorced from all his attributes and from his being as a whole, nor a capacity for choice that is bound by all those attributes and that being as a whole and therefore unfree. . . for he never acts except in harmony with all his attributes, his love, wisdom, righteousness, and so on.”

Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:371.

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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## *God's Actions, Freedom, and Nature*

“To will and to act as his holy, wise, almighty, and loving nature itself wants is for God both the highest freedom and the highest necessity. This, also, is how it is with the incarnation and satisfaction: they may be called ‘necessary,’ not as a necessity that is imposed on God from without and from which he cannot escape, but as actions that are in agreement with his attributes and display them most splendidly.”

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*If There Was Another Way Christ Died In Vain*

**Gal 2:21** “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

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# The Consequent Absolute Necessity of the Atonement

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*If There Was Another Way Christ Died In Vain*

**Gal 2:21** “I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly.”

**Gal 3:21** Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law.