

## **Biblical Theology**

### **U4L4: Atonement Part 2**

#### **Extent of the Atonement**

- When Christ died on the cross, did he pay for the sins of the entire human race or only for the sins of those who he knew would ultimately be saved?
  1. **Many Christians believe that the atonement is limited to God's elect.**
    - **John 10:11** - I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.
    - **Acts 20:28** - Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.
    - **Romans 8:32-34** - He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.
    - **Ephesians 1:3-5** - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—
  2. **Many Christians believe that the atonement is payment for all of man's sins.**
    - **John 1:29** - The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
    - **John 3:16** - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
    - **John 6:51** - I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.
    - **2 Corinthians 5:19** - that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.
    - **1 John 2:2** - He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
    - **2 Peter 2:1** - But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.
  3. **Generally speaking, both schools of thought agree on essential aspects of atonement.**
    - Not all will be saved.
    - The Gospel must be presented to all.
    - Jesus' death was sufficient for salvation.
      - Both sides should avoid implying that there might be some people who come to Christ for salvation but are turned away because Christ did not die for them.
- Conclusion:
  - Christ's death on the cross was sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world but effectively, the atonement will only be applied to God's own (those who put their faith in Christ).

## Healing and the Atonement

- **Isaiah 53:4-5** - Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.
  1. **Many Christians who believe in physical healing believe that it is provided for in the atonement.**
    - The primary purpose of the atonement is cleansing from sin. (Leviticus 16:30)
    - The Old Testament consists of examples of atoning sacrifices being made to protect Israel from physical illness or harm. (Numbers 16:47,48; Exodus 30:11-16)
  2. **A countering view sees physical healing as a continuation of the Messiah's ministry through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit in the church.**
    - This view sees Isaiah 53:4-5 speaking in spiritual terms, not physical.
    - Physical healing takes place, but as a continuation of Christ's ministry, not a result of the crucifixion.
- Conclusion:
  - Christ's death on the cross – atonement – broke the power of sins curse (Colossians 2:13-15) which includes its physical aspects. The scriptures leave room for Christians to disagree on the timing of this physical restoration as to

## Christ in Hell?

- Some Christians hold to the view that part of Christ's atoning work was descending into hell.
  - Some Christians, along with the Apostles Creed, claim that Jesus spent his time between the crucifixion and resurrection in hell.
  - Opposition to this belief:
    - **Luke 23:43** - "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."
    - **John 19:30** - "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.
    - **Luke 23:46** - "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

## Discussion Questions

1. How do reconcile the passages that Christ died for his own with those that state that Christ died for the world? Are you able to articulate your conclusion to someone else?
2. Do you believe that Christ provided physical healing through the atonement or do you believe it is simply a Spirit empowered continuation of the Messiah's ministry? Explain.
3. In spite of some of the differing views among Christians regarding the atonement, what are the essential aspects of the atonement that Christians must agree on?

## Reading Assignment

*Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem – Chapter 28: Ascension and Resurrection*