

Theology

Our Saviour Evangelical Free Church

The Doctrine of Christ & The Doctrine of Redemption Part 1

Key Concepts:

- The person of Jesus Christ
- The atonement
- The resurrection
- Election
- The Gospel Call, Conversion, Regeneration

Pages covered in *Bible Doctrine* by Wayne Grudem: 229-269, 281-314.

The Person of Jesus Christ

God the Son existed before Incarnation (Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:17)

We are prone to forget that God the Son is eternal. Like God the Father and God the Spirit, He has no beginning and no end. Before He was Jesus, He eternally existed as God the Son.

The Rescue Mission

The Virgin Birth (Luke 1:35)

Doctrinal Significance:

1. Salvation ultimately comes from the Lord.
2. Full deity and full humanity could be united in one person.
3. Jesus could be fully human without inherited sin.

Through the only virgin birth ever, Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit's action without any sexual relationship. This type of birth set Jesus up perfectly to be a man of two natures: humanity and divinity. His human mother and divine Father allowed Him to be the God-man. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, this is another act of creation, like Gen. 1:1.

The Incarnation (John 1:14)

Jesus is the Messiah. He is the one whom the prophets foretold and whom God promised. The Old Testament prophets and the New Testament Apostles and other writers all agree that Christ fulfilled three roles: prophet, priest, and king. He was the ultimate prophet, pointing people to God. He was the one true priest, interceding on our behalf. He is the rightful king of this earth. He is the one who can rule with perfection, mercy, justice, and righteousness. He

is called the very word of God (John 1), the same God as the God of the Old Testament (John 8:28), and those who followed Him worshipped Him as God (John 20:29-31).

Could Jesus have sinned?

Technically, He could not have, because He would have no longer been divine. However, this does not mean His temptations were not real. In many ways they were more so, because they remained temptations without ever turning into sin.

The Hypostatic Union (Phil. 2:5-7)

Jesus' had two natures that perfectly came together to form one being. It would be a mistake to believe that Jesus had a "god half" and a "human half." In reality, Jesus' divinity and humanity were inseparable and indistinguishable. He was both God and human. It would also be a mistake to assume that at times Jesus "shut off" either his god piece or his human piece. At all times He was the same, God and man. Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. refuted the three heresies below.

3 Heresies:

Apollinarianism: Apollinaris became bishop of Laodicea in about A.D. 361. Taught that one person of Jesus had a human body and that God the Son brought into that body a mind and spirit of Christ. This is heretical, because it is not just our body that needs redeeming, but all of us.

Nestorianism: There are two separate persons of Christ, one divine and one human. This is heretical, because Christ is one person.

Eutychianism: The human nature of Jesus was taken up or "absorbed" by the divine nature, leading to a third nature. This is heretical because if this was true Jesus wouldn't be fully God or fully man, he would be something else and couldn't atone for sin.

Jesus' Message

Read Mark 1:15; Luke 4:43

The Kingdom

God's Kingdom is a reality in this world. It was inaugurated by Christ and Christ will bring it to its fulfillment when He returns (Matt. 13:24-43).

The Sacrifice

Sin and the Law required a sacrifice. Jesus, the Messiah, became the ultimate, once and for all sacrifice that God demanded (Isa. 53).

The Family

As a member of God's family, for those who have been adopted by God and may be called His children, there are ethics, morals, and conduct we aspire to for God's glory and in response to the great work He has done on our behalf. We must strive for holiness and flee the pursuits of this world (Matt. 5-7; 1 Peter 1:15).

The Atonement

Penal Substitutionary Atonement

The Atonement (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2, 4:10)

Definition: make amends, blot out, and give satisfaction for wrong done; thus reconciling and restoring a disrupted relationship. The atonement is the perfect combination of the love and justice of God.

Why do we need atonement?

Scripture clearly tells us that each of us have been corrupted by sin (see Total Depravity) and do not have the capacity within ourselves to please or appease God who hates sin (Jer. 44:4; Hab. 1:13).

What other ways do people try to get to God?

Religion, morality, faith in other things, science, intellectualism, their "personal" beliefs, etc.

How is atonement made?

Through Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross. In that one, decisive moment, Jesus took our sin upon Himself and God poured out His wrath upon Christ for our sins. This is called propitiation and expiation. Propitiation means that our sins were transferred to Christ and expiation means that they were removed from us. In order to receive the gift of this atoning sacrifice, we need only to trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, repentant of our sin, turn to Him, and pursue a life lived for Christ.

2 Types of Obedience

Active obedience: In order to merit heaven a person couldn't just be made perfect once, but would have to remain perfect for a period of time. Jesus actively maintained perfection over the course of His life.

Passive obedience: In addition to living rightly, Christ took on himself the burden of sin and paid it for us in His death. This is called passive obedience because it was done to Him, He didn't do it to Himself.

What does "penal substitutionary atonement" mean?

Christ took our place on the cross, died our death, and bore the punishment of God's wrath against our sin for us.

Particular Redemption (or Limited Atonement)

Read John 10:14-15

What did God intend to do through the death of Christ?

It is often said that all may come to Christ and anyone may be saved. While this is certainly true, experience tells us it did not happen. In His providence, God, electing some and foreknowing the death and destruction of others, sought to ensure the redemption of all those who would trust in Christ.

Therefore, Christ's sacrifice did not purchase eternal life for everyone, just for those whom God elected for salvation. The proof that may be offered for this doctrine is that not all are saved. If Christ's sacrifice would have been for everyone, all would be saved. However, this is not the case, therefore His sacrifice was only for those whom God would call and who would choose Christ.

Does this change how we share the Gospel?

Absolutely not! For all those who come to faith, Christ's death assures them of salvation. We will never know whom God has called to be saved or not. It must be our assumption that Christ did indeed die for everyone, even when we know, in reality, this is not true.

Effects of the Atonement

Individuals

While each individual is dead in their sin, Christ's sacrifice allows them to be made alive to God through the Holy Spirit.

Universal

The effects of the atonement are not limited to individuals. The redemption given to individual souls is also granted to creation through the cross. From the very first sin of humans, the earth has longed to be renewed (Gen. 3:17-19). Through the power of Jesus' death and resurrection that redemption is guaranteed (Rev. 21:1, 5). This cosmic redemption will also be reflected history, where once violence and strife marked fallen humanity (Hab. 1:3; Rom. 1:29), it will be replaced with peace and harmony (Is. 32:17).

The Resurrection

Read Luke 24:1-3

The Power of the Resurrection (Phil. 3:10)

Christ's resurrection guarantees the victory of God and flips the whole universe upside down. Where once death and decay reigned in the world,

now Christ, through the New Covenant has beaten death and won victory over it.

Proof for the Resurrection:

1. No credible evidence of Jesus' body
2. Disciples who worshipped Him as God
3. Many eyewitnesses

The Doctrine of Redemption

What is salvation? (Acts 4:12)

Divine Election/Sovereign Grace

Definition: *Election is an act of God before creation in which he chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of his sovereign good pleasure.* – Grudem, p. 282.

“What we need to recognize here is that the sovereign initiative in salvation is with God. It is not with man. It is not by virtue of something that God has foreseen in man, some preexisting condition which is the source or root of the elective purpose of God, that God saves him. God in his own sovereign wisdom chooses, for reasons that are sufficient unto himself, those who shall be saved.”

-- D. Roger Nicole

This doctrine is not saying that final salvation is unconditional. It is not. We must meet the condition of **faith in Christ** in order to inherit eternal life. But **faith** is not a condition for **election**. Just the reverse. **Election** is a condition for **faith**. It is because God chose us before the foundation of the world that he purchases our redemption at the cross and quickens us with irresistible grace and brings us to faith.

What does God's Word teach about this doctrine?

Read Romans 8:28-33 and Ephesians 1:3-6.

Romans 8:28-33

"We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose, For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified. What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies."

Often this text is used to argue against unconditional election on the basis of verse 29. Some say that people are not chosen **unconditionally**. They are chosen on the basis of their faith which they produce without the help of God's irresistible **grace** and which God sees **beforehand**.

As C.E.B. Cranfield says, the foreknowledge of Romans 8:29 is "that special taking knowledge of a person which is God's electing grace." Such foreknowledge is virtually the same as election: "Those whom he foreknew (i.e. chose) he predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."

Therefore what this magnificent text (Romans 8:28-33) teaches is that God really **accomplishes** the complete redemption of his people from **start to finish**. He foreknows, i.e. elects a people for himself before the foundation of the world, he predestines this people to be conformed to the image of his Son, he calls them to himself in faith, he justifies them through that faith, and he finally glorifies them—and nothing can separate them from the love of God in Christ for ever and ever (Romans 8:39). To him be all praise and glory! Amen.

Ephesians 1:3-6

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He predestined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace.”

This text states, clearly teaches that Christians were chosen before the foundation of the world and predestined to sonship.

Other (selected) relevant texts:

Acts 13:48 reports how the Gentiles responded to the preaching of the gospel in Antioch of Pisidia. *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.”* Notice, it does not say that as many **believed** were chosen to be ordained to eternal life. The prior election of God is the reason some believed while others did not.

Similarly Jesus says to the Jews in **John 10:26**, *“You do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep.”* He does not say, “You are not my sheep because you do not **believe**.” Being a sheep is something God decides for us before we believe. It is the basis and enablement of our belief. We believe because we are God’s chosen sheep, not vice versa. **(See John 8:47; 18:37.)**

In Romans 9 Paul stresses the unconditionality of election. For example, in verses 11-12 he describes the principle God used in the choice of Jacob over Esau: *“Though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad, in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call, [Rebecca] was told, ‘The elder will serve the younger.’”* God’s election is preserved in its **unconditionality** because it is transacted before we are **born** or have **done** any good or evil.

The unconditionality of God’s electing grace is stressed again in Romans 9:15-16, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So it depends not upon man’s will or exertion, but upon God’s mercy.”

We really do not understand mercy if we think that we can **initiate** it by our own will or **effort**. We are hopelessly bound in the darkness of sin. If we are going to be saved, God will have to unconditionally take the

initiative in our heart and **irresistibly** make us willing to submit to him.
(See Romans 11:7.)

2 Timothy 1:9. Here again Paul connects God's **calling** his people to his purpose. *"He saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity."*

This is a controversial doctrine, but when properly understood can bring:

- Comfort
- A reason to praise God
- Encouragement for evangelism (2 Tim. 2:10)

The Gospel Call

Read Romans 10:14.

Effective calling is an act of God. The Gospel Call is the responsibility of all Christians.

Three Elements of the Gospel Call

- Explanation of the Gospel (God, Man, Jesus)
- Invitation to Respond
- Promise of Eternal Life

Regeneration (John 3:3)

Conversion (Acts 2:38)

There must be faith and repentance.

Discussion & Application Questions

How does the fact that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man (the hypostatic union) cause you to worship Him and trust in Him more for life and salvation? What would be different if He was not either one of those things?

If the love and justice of God are the causes of the atonement, is there anything in you that requires God to love you? To what extent does this inform or change your understanding of Jesus active and passive obedience on your behalf?

Some aspects of the atonement can be hard to understand, grasp, or accept. Is this the case in any way for you? In what areas? Where are some places you can go in Scripture to help answer your questions and teach you about the extent of the atonement?

Why is the hope of the resurrection such an incredible promise? What aspects of that promise bring you the most hope and joy?

Have you repented of your sin and come to faith in Christ or do you just hold intellectual knowledge and approve of the facts of salvation? If you have not, what is holding you back?

How do you react to the doctrine of election? If you agree with this doctrine, how does it cause you to worship God and glorify Him? If you are having trouble accepting this idea as truth, what Scriptures do you see teaching other possibilities?

For the next session read pages 315-329, 348-358.