

Associated Gospel Churches - Articles of Faith and Doctrine

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

January 8, 2006

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

VIII. Atonement by the Blood of Christ

We believe that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin, and made a curse for us, dying in our place, a Sacrifice acceptable to God and effectual for every sinner who receives Him.

Leviticus 17:11; Galatians 3:13; Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7; John 1:12; 1 Peter 1:18-19, 2:24; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 5:6-9

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**
 - **to atone = to make amends, to set things right**
 - **the work Christ did in His life and death to earn our salvation**

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- 2 aspects of Christ’s work of atonement

- “*passive*” obedience - **His sufferings and death on our behalf so our sins could be forgiven**

- most often thought of wrt the Atonement

- AGC article focuses on this aspect

- “*active*” obedience - **His life of perfect obedience to earn righteousness for us so we could have favor and eternal life with God**

- “God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that *in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*” (2 Cor. 5:21)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the need for the Atonement:

- 1) we deserve to die because of our sin

- God’s justice demands the price be paid, but in His mercy permits a substitute (“*vicarious atonement*”)

- a sacrifice to take our place

- “...without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” (Heb 9:22)

- in the OT, animal sacrifice prescribed

- “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.” (Lev 17:11)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the need for the Atonement:

- 1) we deserve to die because of our sin

- but animal sacrifices inadequate

- “But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins, because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”
(Heb 10:3-4)

- need a human substitute to atone for human sins

- thus, the need for the Incarnation

- “Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity so that by his death He might destroy Him who holds the power of death... For this reason, He had to be made like His brothers in every way... that He might make atonement for the sins of the people.” (Heb 2:14-17)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**

- **the need for the Atonement:**

- 1) we deserve to die because of our sin**

- **Jesus Christ died in our place to pay the penalty for our sins, so that we might be forgiven**

- “**This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**” (Matt. 26:28)

- “**You see, at just the right time, while we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**” (Rom. 5:6-8)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the need for the Atonement:

- 2) we deserve God's wrath because of our sin

- “...we were by nature objects of wrath” (Eph 2:3)

- but God put Christ forward as a *propitiation*

- i.e. a sacrifice that bears God's wrath to the full and in so doing changes God's wrath toward us into favor

- *satisfaction* of demands of God's holy justice

- was able to bear all the wrath of God against all our sin, and bear it to the end, by virtue of being fully God and fully Man

- not eternal suffering, but complete payment

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the need for the Atonement:

- 2) we deserve God's wrath because of our sin

- God put Christ forward as a *propitiation*

- “God presented Him as a sacrifice of atonement [*propitiation*], through faith in His blood. He did this to demonstrate His justice, because in His forbearance He had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.” (Rom 3:25)

- “For this reason, He had to be made like His brothers in every way... that He might make atonement [*propitiation*] for the sins of the people.” (Heb 2:17)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**

- the need for the Atonement:

- 2) we deserve God's wrath because of our sin**

- Christ's work of propitiation completed on the Cross

- **His sufferings came to an end when He had borne the full measure of God's wrath against sin**

- “Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’... When He had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.”
(John 19:28,30)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**

- the need for the Atonement:

- 2) we deserve God's wrath because of our sin**

- Christ's work of propitiation completed on the Cross

- **contradicts Roman Catholic teaching on the Mass as a repetition of the sacrifice of Christ every time Mass is offered**

- “Nor did He enter heaven to offer Himself again and again... Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people...” (Hebrews 9:25-28)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**

- the need for the Atonement:

- 2) we deserve God's wrath because of our sin**

- Christ's work of propitiation completed on the Cross

- **as a result, we have assurance that there is no penalty for sin left for us to pay - it was paid in full by Christ!**

- “Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through Him!” (Rom. 5:9)

- “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” [!] (Rom. 8:1)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the need for the Atonement:

- 3) we were separated from God by our sin

- need *reconciliation* - restoration of fellowship with God

- “All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them...” (1 Cor. 5:18-19)

- “Yet to all who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the need for the Atonement:

- 4) we were in bondage to sin and to the kingdom of Satan

- we need someone to free us from bondage to sin -
‘redemption’

- “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Eph. 1:7)

- “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver and gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.” (1 Pet. 1:18-19)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the need for the Atonement:

- 4) we were in bondage to sin and to the kingdom of Satan

- in Christ, we have been freed from the “curse of the law”

- “All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law’... Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’” (Gal. 3:10,13)

- “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.” (1 Pet. 2:24)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**

- the need for the Atonement:

- 4) we were in bondage to sin and to the kingdom of Satan

- in Christ, we have been delivered from the kingdom of Satan, to the kingdom of God

- “For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Col. 1:13-14)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the extent of the Atonement:

“We believe that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin, and made a curse for us, dying in our place, a Sacrifice acceptable to God and effectual for every sinner who receives Him.”

- i.e. the Atonement applies to everyone who receives Him by faith

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**

- the extent of the Atonement:

- the Atonement applies to everyone who receives Christ by faith

- but when Christ died, did He pay for the sins of the entire human race, or only for the sins of those He knew would ultimately believe in Him and be saved?

- 2 opposing views

- Limited atonement (or particular redemption) - the historic Reformed view
 - Unlimited atonement (or general redemption) -the historic Arminian view

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the extent of the Atonement:

- **unlimited atonement**

- Christ died for the sins of the entire human race, not just for the sins of those He knew would believe and be saved
 - but Christ's work of atonement only effective for those who would believe in Him
 - Christ's death made *possible* salvation for everyone, but *certain* for no one
 - argue that limited atonement compromises the free offer of the Gospel to everyone
 - if Christ died only for those He knew would believe and be saved, how can the offer of the Gospel really be made to everyone?

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the extent of the Atonement:

- unlimited atonement

- some Scripture passages cited in support

- “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 3:16)

- “He is the atoning sacrifice [propitiation] for our sins, and not only for ours *but also for the sins of the whole world.*” (1 John 2:2)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**
 - the extent of the Atonement:
 - **limited atonement**
 - the historic Reformed view
 - the 'L' of TULIP
 - Christ died only for the sins of the elect, i.e. those whom God had called, who would believe and be saved
 - **made salvation certain for those whom God called**

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the extent of the Atonement:

- **limited atonement**

- the free offer of the Gospel still can be made to everyone, because from our perspective, we don't know who will believe
 - object that if Christ's death actually paid for the sins of the entire human race, then there is no penalty left for anyone to pay
 - **would be unjust for God to punish anyone's sins again, since they had already been fully punished in Christ**
 - **necessarily follows that everyone must be saved**

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**

- the extent of the Atonement:

- **limited atonement**

- argue that passages speaking of Christ dying for ‘the world’ refer to the idea that sinners in general, from all over the world, will be saved

- e.g. **John 1:29** - “**Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.**”

- refers to Christ taking away the sins of His people from all over the world, not to taking away the sins of every single person in the world

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the extent of the Atonement:

- limited atonement

- some Scripture passages cited in support

- “I am the good shepherd. I know my sheep and my sheep know me... and *I lay down my life for the sheep.*” (John 11:14-15)

- “...Be shepherds *of the church of God*, which He bought with His own blood.” (1 John 2:2)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Atonement**

- **the extent of the Atonement:**

- **unlimited vs. limited atonement - points of agreement**

- Christ's work of atonement has infinite merit and is sufficient to pay the penalty for the sins of as many as would believe (even of the whole world, if God so willed)

- not all will be saved - only those who believe

- **Christ's work sufficient for all, but efficient only for some**

- free offer of the Gospel can and should be made to every person

- **“whosoever will” may come, and no one who comes will be turned away**

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- Atonement

- the extent of the Atonement:

- the AGC position

- “...effectual for every sinner who receives Him.”

- does not state definitive position

- seems to lean toward unlimited atonement (general redemption), but does not exclude limited atonement (particular redemption)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Summary**

- we deserve to die because of our sin

- but Christ died in our place, that we might have life

- we deserve God's wrath because of our sin

- but God made Jesus Christ a propitiation for our sins

- Christ bore God's wrath against our sin completely, so we no longer have to face it and are free from condemnation

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Summary**

- we were separated from God by our sin

- **but Christ reconciled us to God through faith in Him**

- we were in bondage to sin and to the kingdom of Satan

- **but Christ redeemed us with His own blood and set us free**

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”

(2 Cor. 5:21)

Atonement by the Blood of Christ

- **Hymns of response**
 - **Hallelujah, What a Saviour! (#130)**
 - **My Saviour's Love (#71)**

Next class

**Regeneration by the Holy Spirit
&
The Believer's Eternal Salvation**

January 15, 2006

References

- **Berkhof, Louis.** *The History of Christian Doctrines.* (London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1969), p. 165-199.
- **Grudem, Wayne.** *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine.* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), p. 568-607.
- **Sproul, R.C.** *Essentials Truths of the Christian Faith.* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1992), p.173-177.