

English Transcript

Foundations of the Christian Faith – Course

Lesson 6 - Salvation (Part 1)

Welcome to Foundations of the Christian Faith, Course 2. We have only two lessons remaining in this course, Lessons 6 and 7. Both lessons will explore the doctrine related to Salvation. Turn with me to page 32 in your handout.

The Doctrine of Salvation is the centerpiece of Christian theology. At the heart of this doctrine is the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Scripture clearly identifies Jesus as the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. It also insists that salvation is for those who confess their faith in Jesus Christ based on his death, burial, and resurrection. Romans 10:9-10 says,

“If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.”

There is no salvation outside of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12 says,

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

There are various theological positions regarding the biblical study of salvation. These views span a continuum of perspectives focused on God's full sovereign grace at one end and man's free will on the other, and with many alternative views in between.

Various denominations have identified with specific views over the past five hundred years. We do not have time for a comparative study of all these views, nor would this be very edifying. As with each of our GTN courses, our objective will be to draw out the primary biblical principles and remain focused on the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ regarding his atonement for sin.

In the next two lessons, we will consider the doctrines related to atonement and the ministries involved in the application of redemption. Historically, this study has been labeled the *“ordo salutis,”* the way of salvation. This presentation attempts to arrange in a logical order the activities involved in applying salvation to an individual.

Many of these activities happen concurrently and remain a mystery to us regarding *“how”* salvation is applied. The most important aspects are *“why”* we need salvation and *“what”* happens related to salvation as we stay focused on the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The death of Jesus on the cross created a wondrous provision for our salvation. In this lesson, we will focus on Christ's atoning sacrifice for sin. We may define the atonement as *“the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation”* (Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology, 1994).

Since the foundation of the Church, there has been agreement on the core elements of the cross of Christ across all traditions.

For example, all Christians agree on the following:

- We owe our salvation to the death of Christ.
- Christ's death was a real sacrifice.
- This sacrifice atoned for the sin of the world.
- And the result is eternal life, peace with God, and forgiveness of sin.

“The early Church did not convene a council to settle the doctrine because the basic understanding of the cross was understood. No doubt, theologians emphasized different points in describing the nature of the cross, but they were clear that the redemptive power of Christ lay precisely in his death, the one great sacrifice for the sin of the world. (Donald MacLeod, *Christ Crucified: Understanding the Atonement*)”

Turn with me to page 33.

Let us begin with 1 John 2:2.

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the sins of the world.”

The apostle John tells us in this verse that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

What does the word atonement mean? If we break this word into three syllables, we get a sense of what this word means. At-One-Ment. At-One-Ment.

Through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we can be “at one” with God. We can be brought back into a restored relationship with a holy God. In the Old Testament the “atonement” had the idea of covering over sin. This was at the center of the Day Atonement that occurred once a year. The High Priest brought the sacrifice for atonement into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the cover of the Ark of the Covenant. The prior year’s sins of the High Priest and the nation of Israel were forgiven or covered over. This process was repeated year after year, because as we learn from the book of Hebrews, the blood of goats and bulls never took away sin. Hebrews 9:13-14 says,

“The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!”

Since Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, what does his death do in reference to our sin? We will talk about that in this lesson.

For whom did Jesus make an atoning sacrifice? We will discuss that as well.

This is good place to remember the truths of the doctrine of sin from the prior lessons. Everyone in the world stands condemned for these reasons:

- The sin of Adam was imputed to each of us. We are all guilty before a holy God.
- Our sin nature was inherited from Adam across the generations and by nature, we are objects of God's wrath.
- Our personal choices to disobey God and His Word demonstrate on a daily basis that all have sinned a fall short of the glory of God.

Sin is the universal condition of humanity and there is a universal need to be saved from sin's penalty.

What is the cause and necessity of atonement? Why did God send his son to die for us?

The most obvious cause and source of the atonement is the great love God bears towards his creation. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son.

His love, however, can never be expressed apart from his justice. We see this truth expressed in Romans 3:25-26,

"God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus."

God's justice prevented him from having the fellowship with us which he desires. He was prevented from ignoring sin because of his just nature. A payment needed to be made for sin. And that payment required the death of the guilty party. The Romans passage says that God knew the hearts of those before the coming of Christ who had faith in God's promise of a Messiah. God delayed his judgment for sin until Christ came to die as the atoning sacrifice for the sin of the world. Jesus' blood could be applied back in time to satisfy God's justice for all who died prior to Christ's atoning sacrifice who had faith and looked forward to the promised Savior. And Christ's blood is applied forward to all who look back toward the cross for salvation. Jesus' atoning sacrifice satisfied the wrath of God, was an expression of God's justice and his love working together.

You may have heard this theological term, **Penal Substitutionary Atonement**.

Sometimes this is referred to as *"The Great Exchange."* 2 Corinthians 5:21 says,

"God made him who had no sin to become sin for us so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

This doctrine states that Christ died on the cross as a substitute for sinners. God imputed the guilt of our sin to Christ. Jesus bore the punishment for sin that we deserve. This was a full payment for sin which satisfied both the wrath of God and the righteousness requirements of the Law, so that God could freely forgive sinners without compromising His own holy standard.

Let us further define each of these terms.

The word “*Penal*” refers to the corrupted state of humanity in which we stand under God's judgment and the penalty of death.

- This one word picks up a central feature of the Bible storyline. As the covenant head and representative of humanity, Adam disobeyed God, and his sin became our sin by nature, imputation, and by personal choice.
- All humanity is in Adam and therefore under the dominion, power, and penalty of sin.
- As a result, we are alienated from the God who created us to know him and love him.
- We are under God’s verdict of condemnation. Because he is holy, just, and righteous, he stands opposed to us because of our sin.

That is the bad news that requires a solution that can only be found outside of us.

The word “*Substitutionary*” refers to the person and work of the Lord Jesus who acted on our behalf through his death on the cross for the sin of the world.

- This picks up the Bible storyline to speak of the Triune God of sovereign grace choosing to redeem a people instead of leaving us in our sin and depravity and under his judgment.
- God redeems us through the provision of our substitute.
- As our new covenant head, Christ represents us in his life and death as the greater Adam who willingly obeyed the Father in perfect holiness.
- In death, Christ stood in our place, took God's demand for our righteousness upon himself through a sinless life, and paid our debt by receiving the penalty we deserve.
- The result of Christ's substitutionary work for us is that by our faith in Christ, God the Father declares us just, forgiven of every sin, and frees us from the power of sin and the tyranny of Satan who once held the fear of death and condemnation over our heads.

Galatians 3:13

“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 pole.”

Hebrews 9:28

“Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.”

Romans 8:32

“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?”

To say that the cross is “penal substitution” is another way of proclaiming the gospel of God's sovereign grace. Our focus in lessons 6 and 7 is to exalt the person and work of the

Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior, and our Substitute, whose work accomplished everything for us.

We continue on the middle of page 34 as we discuss the **Nature of the Atonement**.

The atonement required Christ's obedience.

Jesus' obedience was total. It brought him to the earth through a perfect, obedient life and all the way to the cross. Philippians 2:5-8 makes this clear for us,

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

Christ's obedient life enabled him to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and to impute or credit his righteousness to us at the moment of salvation.

The atonement required Christ's suffering.

There was suffering in life. Jesus suffered in many ways throughout his earthly life. There are references for each of these in your handout. There was temptation, grief, loss, hostility, sorrow, betrayal, denial, and rejection.

Isaiah referred to Jesus, the promised Messiah, as the Suffering Servant.

There was suffering in death. Jesus' suffering reached its climax at the cross. This involved the pain of crucifixion, the pain of bearing sin, abandonment before the Father, and even bearing the wrath of a holy God. We see this clearly in Isaiah's prophesy of the crucifixion in chapter 53:4-10 says,

“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. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand.”

The atonement of Jesus Christ meets our greatest spiritual needs.

This is on the top of page 35.

Although the full meaning of the death of Christ cannot be captured in one or two simple statements, it is also true that its central meaning can and must focus on several basic ideas. There are at least four such essential doctrines. Christ's death was a substitution for sinners, a redemption in relation to sin, a reconciliation in relation to man or the world, and a propitiation in relation to God.

Let us define each of these doctrinal points.

Christ' death was a substitution for sinners.

A short phrase to summarize this truth might be **"Jesus took my place!"**

Christ suffered as a substitute for us. Christ died in our place to pay the penalty of death that we deserve.

1 Peter 3:18

"For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit."

Mark 10:45.

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- Jesus was made sin for us.
- He bore our sin in His own body on the cross.
- He suffered once to bear the sins of others.
- He was tortured for others' sins.
- He was made a curse for you and for me.

Christ's death brings redemption in relation to sin.

The summary phrase for redemption might **"Paid in full" or "Set free."**

Redemption means liberation, freedom because of a payment has been made. For believers, the payment was the precious blood of the Lord Jesus. 1 Peter 1:18-19 says,

"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

- People are redeemed from something. They are redeemed or purchased out of the marketplace of sin.

- People are redeemed by something. The payment of a price, the blood of Jesus Christ.
- People are redeemed to something. A state of freedom; set free to serve the Living God.

Christ' death provides reconciliation in relation to the world.

The summary phrase for reconciliation might be **"Accepted."**

Reconciliation means a change of relationship from hostility to harmony between two parties. People can be reconciled to one another, and people can be reconciled to God.

"For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Colossians 1:20)

Why is there a need for reconciliation?

Because of sin, God and man are in a relationship of hostility and enmity. The need for reconciliation lies in God's enmity against sinful humanity. Romans 5:10 states,

"For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!"

What is the cause of reconciliation - how did it come about?

Reconciliation comes through the death of the Lord Jesus. God made Him to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Christ. God's provision of reconciliation is universal.

Through the death of Christ, the position of the world from God's perspective was changed. God now views the world through the lens of available grace and mercy based on Christ's finished work. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 says,

"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 people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

This ministry of reconciliation must be faithfully discharged by proclaiming the gospel message. When an individual believes, then he receives the full reconciliation God provided through Christ's death.

Individual reconciliation through faith in Christ restores the person's relationship with God and changes the position of the person from unsaved to saved, from an object of wrath to the recipient of God's mercy and grace. Only then are his sins forgiven.

The object of reconciliation - who is the focus?

God has reconciled himself to man as a result of Christ's substitutionary death for the sin of the world and through faith in Christ, the repentant sinner is reconciled to God.

The fourth doctrinal point of Penal Substitutionary Atonement is that Christ's death is a propitiation in relationship to God.

The phrase summarize this point might be **"God is satisfied."**

Propitiation means the turning away of wrath by an offering. In relation to the doctrine of salvation, propitiation means appeasing or satisfying the wrath of God by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Atonement has the picture of covering over sin while propitiation goes further and washes sin away.

The need for propitiation is because of the wrath of God.

Scripture speaks of divine hostility or wrath against sin in a personal way. John 3:36 says,

"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them."

To appease God's wrath was not a matter of vengeance but of justice and it required the sacrificial gift of God's Son.

The provision of propitiation was the sacrifice of Christ.

The Apostle Paul linked propitiation with the death of Christ in Romans 3:25. The references in 1 John 2:2 and 4:9-10 both stress the fact that Christ himself is the offering that completely turns away the wrath of God.

"He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

If, because of the death of Christ, God's justice is satisfied, then what can the sinner offer to try to satisfy God? The answer is nothing.

Everything has been done by God himself. The sinner need only receive the gift of righteousness God offers by grace through faith. Through the death of Christ, God's just

wrath is appeased and satisfied eternally. This is the message we bring to the lost world. Receive the Savior who through his death satisfied and washed away the wrath of God.

On page 36 we will discuss the Extent of the Atonement.

Did Christ die for all people or just those chosen by God in eternity past?

A clear reading of the scriptures seems to teach that Christ loved and died for the entire world. Christ's atonement for sin is available to the entire world. Yet only those who respond by grace through faith to the offer of salvation will be saved. This implies that redemption is limited to those who believe.

There are many verses throughout the New Testament that reinforce the doctrine of unlimited atonement. The references for these verses are included in your handout.

- For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.
- Christ Jesus gave himself as a ransom for all people.
- For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.
- Christ came so that he might taste death for everyone.
- We have our hopes set on the living God who is the Savior of all people.
- Jesus is the propitiation for our sins and the sins of the entire world.

The Bible also teaches two principles that on the surface seem to contradict each other. The first is man's responsibility to freely choose to accept or reject God's offer of forgiveness of sin and eternal life. The second relates to God's sovereignty related to the predestination or election of those who will believe from eternity past.

The Scriptures present both man's responsibility and God's sovereignty. God foreknew, chose, and secured the salvation of a limited number of persons while man is free and responsible to respond to the offer of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3-6 says,

"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—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves."

Romans 8:29-30 says,

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

1 Peter 1:1-2 speaks of the same truth,

“Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to God’s elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled with his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”

However, it would be wrong to imply that God is partial and arbitrary in his choice and not all loving. God's grace is effective on the willing. When speaking about predestination, we must never treat it in isolation from God's entire plan of salvation.

- All have sinned and are destined for eternal damnation.
- In God's infinite love, he has provided salvation in Christ for those who confess their sin and trust in the atoning work of Christ, redemption from sin, reconciliation towards man, and propitiation towards God.
- And outside of this provision of God, nobody can be saved.

There are three statements that also frame the extent of our atonement and salvation.

In the past, we were saved from the penalty of sin. We call this **Justification**. Noticed the past tense of the verb, “saved”.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Justification is a legal declaration by God that we have a righteous standing before him based solely on our faith in Christ. This happens at the moment of salvation.

In the present, we are being saved from the power of sin. We call this **Sanctification**.

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18)

Sanctification is the progressive action of God by which he changes our hearts and transforms us into the likeness of Christ. This happens throughout our lives until we die or Jesus returns.

In the future, we will be saved from the presence of sin. We call this **Glorification**.

“Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!” (Romans 5:9)

Glorification is the point in time in which God removes all sin from our lives and gives us new resurrected bodies. This happens either after death or when Jesus returns. This means that Jesus's death accomplished all that God intended. Jesus said it is finished. We have not yet experienced all that there is to experience of salvation in this life. There is more to look forward to for eternity in the new heaven and new earth.

As we close Lesson 6, here are a few summary thoughts.

- Jesus died as the atoning sacrifice for you and me.
- His death was rooted in the great love of God for his creation.
- It involved Jesus obeying the Father and suffering for as our substitute for sin during his life and death.
- Jesus' death satisfied God's justice and appeased God's great wrath against sin.
- Jesus' death redeemed us from slavery to sin and reconciled us to God.
- Jesus' death atoned for the sin of Adam which we all inherited.
- Salvation is available to all who are willing to repent of their sin and receive the gift of salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah, What a Savior!

When we continue with our final lesson, we will discuss God's plan of salvation and its application to those who choose to respond to God's gift and call upon the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved.