

What Did Jesus Do?

- Titles for Christ
- Offices of Christ
- Theories of the atonement
- Biblical images
- Recent criticisms
- Christ's ongoing work
- The extent of the atonement

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Titles for Christ

- A traditional way of doing Christology.
- Son of God - specially chosen by God (special commission, special relationship).
- Son of Man - present ministry, suffering and resurrection, coming in judgment.
- Word (*Logos*) - revealer, preexistence.
- Christ/Messiah - anointed one (title).
- Lord (*Kyrios*) - exalted and reigning.

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Titles for Christ

- Savior (*Soter*) - rare; rescuer of the world.
- God (*Theos*) - also rare.
- NT writers are willing to apply to Jesus titles formerly reserved for Yahweh.
- They imply both divinity and humanity.
- Jesus filled "Messiah" with his own meaning: suffering servant.
- "Lord" shows we owe him our allegiance.

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Titles of Christ

- Jesus used Suffering Servant to redefine what Messiah and Son of Man meant.
 - Used priestly office to define prophet and king.
 - He added Son of Man sayings on suffering.
 - His ministry was one of radical servanthood.
 - Had to redefine his disciples' expectations.
 - His ministry was one of rejection and suffering.
 - Only in his exaltation and return would his triumph appear.

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Offices of Christ

- Estates of Christ – his descent (humiliation) and ascent (exaltation).
- Reformed tradition – “offices” of Christ as prophet, priest, and king.

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Offices of Christ

- In what ways is/was Jesus a prophet?
 - Jesus as revealer: he revealed God (Mt. 11:27).
 - He was called a prophet (Mt. 16:14-15; 21:11; Acts 3:22; 7:37).
 - He called himself one (Mt. 13:57).
 - Fulfillment of Deut. 18:15 (one like Moses).
 - Teaching ministry: salvation and woes.
 - Will reveal God finally in his second coming.
 - His work surpassed the prophets' (Heb. 1:1-3).

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Offices of Christ

- In what ways is/was Jesus a priest?
 - Jesus as reconciler: his work as mediator.
 - High priestly prayer for disciples (John 17).
 - Offering atonement.
 - Both sacrifice and high priest (Heb. 8-10).
 - Ongoing intercession (Heb. 7:25; 9:24).
 - He acts as God's agent on behalf of others.

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Offices of Christ

- In what ways is/was Jesus a king?
 - Jesus as ruler.
 - Wise men came to worship him as king.
 - Kingdom of God was his message.
 - He inaugurated the kingdom through preaching, healing, exorcism (Mt. 12:28; Lk. 11:20).
 - Rejected attempts to make him king (Jn. 6:15).
 - Acknowledged in triumphal entry (Mt. 21:4-5).
 - Executed as King of the Jews (Lk. 23:38).
 - His kingship is already/not yet.

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Offices of Christ

- Does any of Jesus' life and ministry not fit into one of these three categories?
 - Teaching ministry not quite like prophets'.
 - Called a rabbi by people; teacher of wisdom.
 - Table fellowship with the disreputable.
 - Nature and extent of his healings.
 - Exorcisms showed spiritual warfare.
 - Life in community.
 - Intimate relationship with the Father.

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Theories of Atonement

- Words related to atonement:
 - Hebrew *kephar* (to cover); cf. Yom Kippur
 - Greek *hilasmos* (propitiation or expiation)
 - English *at + one + ment* (reconciliation)
- Atonement = the work of Christ for us.

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Theories of Atonement

- *Christus Victor* (“dynamic imagery”)
 - Dominant from 2nd-6th centuries.
 - “Classical” or “dramatic” or “ransom” view.
 - Cross was decisive defeat of powers of evil.
 - See Mark 10:45; Heb. 2:14-15.
- Recapitulation (Irenaeus)
 - See Rom. 5; 1 Cor. 15 (Adam/Christ).
 - Christ retraces human history, gets it right, and becomes the source of a new humanity.

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Theories of Atonement

- Incarnational theory (patristic period)
 - “The Word was made man that we might be made divine” (Athanasius).
 - Salvation as *theosis* (deification/divinization).
 - See 2 Peter 1:4.
 - We become like God as God’s image is restored in us by the Holy Spirit.
 - Divine and human come together in Jesus.
 - Still emphasized in Eastern Orthodoxy.

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Theories of Atonement

- Satisfaction theory (Anselm)
 - *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why Did God Become Man?*)
 - God as feudal overlord; people as vassals.
 - Sin as offense against God's honor.
 - Satisfaction must be made to God (penance):
 - By a human (a human offense).
 - By God (infinite satisfaction required).
 - Therefore it must be made by a God/man.
 - Jesus is our substitute.
 - Also called “commercial” theory.

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Theories of Atonement

- Moral influence theory (Abelard)
 - “Exemplarist” theory
 - Demonstration of God's love.
 - See Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:10-11.
 - God's love overcomes our fear and ignorance and prompts us to respond to him in love.
 - Popular in Middle Ages until Reformation; also in classical liberalism.

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Theories of Atonement

- Penal-substitution theory (Calvin et al.)
 - Further development of Satisfaction theory.
 - Satisfaction paid to God's wrath against sin.
 - God as ruler, lawgiver, and judge.
 - Sin as law breaking that deserves punishment.
 - Christ bore our punishment in our place.
 - See Rom. 4:22-25; 2 Cor. 5:21.
 - Became dominant in Protestant Scholastic Orthodoxy (following Reformation).

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Theories of Atonement

- Governmental theory (moral governance)
 - Hugo Grotius: emphasizes God's law.
 - God is ruler and lawgiver.
 - He must uphold the moral order.
 - The cross demonstrates the penalty for sin.
 - Jesus did *not* suffer our punishment.
 - The cross should deter people from committing future sin. This allows God to forgive sin without encouraging further sin.

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Biblical Images

- Jesus' death is an example (Phil. 2:3-8).
- It's a ransom (Mark 10:45).
- It's a victory (Col. 2:15).
- It covers sin (Rom. 3:25-26).
- It reconciles us to God (Rom. 5:10-11).
- It's a sacrifice (Heb. 9:6-15).

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Biblical Images

- Expiation or propitiation?
 - Expiation = cover sins.
 - Propitiation = turn away someone's wrath.
 - Does God's attitude toward us need to be changed?
 - Romans 1 shows God's wrath in action.

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Biblical Images

- NT uses many images to express atonement.
 - J. Driver: No single image can capture the full meaning of Christ's work.
 - Images are powerful expressions of a reality that we can't fully express rationally.
- How well do the various theories of the atonement account for the biblical images?

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Biblical Images

- In relation to the "alphabet of sin"...
 - A = Alienation - Moral Influence
 - B = Bondage - Christus Victor
 - C = Condemnation - Penal-substitution, Governmental, Satisfaction?
 - D = Depravity - Incarnational
 - E = Eternal death - Recapitulation
- These theories tend to specialize in certain aspects of the human problem.

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Biblical Images

- No single theory of atonement is sufficient to account for Christ's work.
 - We need all of them (and maybe more) to see the whole truth.
 - None of these has dogmatic authority.
 - Don't use one as a test of fellowship!
 - We may need new theories to explain in new contexts what Jesus has done.

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Recent Criticisms

- Some feminists: atonement is “divine child abuse.”
 - Shows God as abusive father punishing the innocent son.
 - Encourages abuse, especially in families.
 - Penal-substitution theory is especially vulnerable to this criticism.

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Recent Criticisms

- Anabaptists have critiqued the satisfaction and penal-substitution theories.
 - No regeneration or reconciliation.
 - Sacralizes violence.
 - No solution for the social dimension of sin.
 - No foundation for ethics.
 - They often prefer Christus Victor.
 - J. D. Weaver: Christus Victor was rejected because the church accommodated to the world.

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Recent Criticisms

- C. Norman Kraus: representative substitution model.
 - God identified with us in Christ.
 - Christ became our (final) scapegoat.
 - His act freed us from sin and gave us a new identity as God’s children.
 - We benefit as we identify with Christ and follow him in discipleship.
 - Parent-child image.

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Christ's Ongoing Work

- Ascension and exaltation (Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9; 2:32-36).
- Reigns as Lord (1 Cor. 15:24-28).
- Intercedes for believers (Heb. 7:25).
- Directs his church (John 16:13-14).
- Will return to complete his reign (1 Cor. 15:24-28).

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Christ's Ongoing Work

- Implications of Christ's ongoing ministry?
 - It should inform our prayers.
 - We can adore him and give him thanks.
 - We can trust him to intercede for us.
 - We should acknowledge him as our Lord.
 - We can rely on him for direction, through the Spirit.
 - We should be faithful in anticipation of his return.

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Extent of the Atonement

- Christ's work was sufficient for the sins of the world. For whom was it intended?
 - Limited or particular atonement: Christ died for the elect only (Calvinism).
 - General or universal atonement: Christ died for everyone, but only those who believe will benefit (Arminianism).

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Extent of the Atonement

- Limited atonement focuses on passages that say Christ died for his people.
 - Lays down his life for the sheep (John 10:15).
 - For his friends (John 15:13).
 - For the church (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:25).
- Logically follows from the other four points of Calvinism. Why would Christ die for people God had decided not to save?

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Extent of the Atonement

- “If God from eternity determined to save one portion of the human race and not another, it seems to be a contradiction to say that the plan of salvation had equal reference to both portions; that the Father sent his Son to die for those whom He had predetermined not to save, as truly as, and in the same sense that He gave Him up for those whom He had chosen to make the heirs of salvation.”
Charles Hodge

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Extent of the Atonement

- Universal atonement focuses on passages that say Christ died for the everyone.
 - Takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29).
 - God so loved the world (John 3:16).
 - He died for all (2 Cor. 5:14-15).
 - He’s a ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6).
 - God doesn’t want any to perish (2 Pet. 3:9).
 - Savior of all, especially believers (1 Tim. 4:10).
 - Atonement for sins of world (1 John 2:1-2).

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Extent of the Atonement

- Universal atonement also focuses on the command to proclaim the gospel to all.
- Universal atonement is NOT universal salvation.
 - Means Christ died for all.
 - Does not mean all will be saved.
 - Either not all are elect, or not all will respond.

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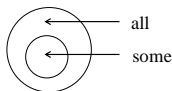
Extent of the Atonement

- Grenz: atonement is both objective and subjective.
 - Objective = accomplished fact that has changed the reality of the human situation. Offered to everyone.
 - Subjective = experienced only by those who respond to the offer.
- This means that hell is our own doing.

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Extent of the Atonement

- “Limited” verses can be explained in context.
 - The church is the subject of discussion.
 - Christ did die for believers; the verses don’t say for believers *only*.
 - “Some” is a subset of “all” (e.g., “Jesus died for me”).



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Extent of the Atonement

- Universal atonement makes the best sense of the biblical data.
- This is the point of TULIP that is rejected by “four-point” Calvinists.
- But four-point Calvinism is logically inconsistent.
 - Why would God offer salvation to those he doesn’t intend to save?
 - Why should Christ die for them?

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Extent of the Atonement

- What about those who haven’t heard – or adherents of other religions?
 - Must all salvation be through Christ?
 - Must all salvation be by means of explicit confession of Christ?

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Extent of the Atonement

- Three basic positions on these issues:
 - Exclusivism: Jesus is the only way; explicit confession of Christ is necessary for salvation.
 - Inclusivism: Jesus is the only way, but he may save people without explicit confession.
 - Pluralism: There are many ways of salvation.
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of these views?
- What do you think?

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