

Important *Before-the-question* issue: “theology” = theos logos = “Words **about** God”

Q: Who is Jesus and What did he Do?

Q: How & Why did Jesus Die?

The facts from witnesses:

1. Scripture-4 different Gospels
2. Josephus (Jewish historian.)

Q: What is the *meaning* of Jesus' death? What is Atonement?

This is all about interpretation. The church, throughout centuries, has had various understandings of this, from which come different emphases in the life of faith. There is no “**dogma**” or correct interpretation about the meaning of what Jesus did.

Today we'll explore several of the Classic Theories of Atonement. (Thanks to Ted Peters' *Models of Atonement*, 12/10/2005)

| Model | Human Predicament | Jesus' Work | Our Work |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------|----------|
| Teacher | | | |
| Moral Example | | | |
| Victorious Champion | | | |
| Satisfaction | | | |
| Happy Exchange | | | |
| Final Scapegoat | | | |

ATONEMENT THEORIES: **Jesus as TEACHER**

John 14:6: _____

John 8:12: _____

Psalm 119:103 _____

Sermon on the Mount: Matthew 5-7 _____

Human Predicament: Ignorance

What Jesus Does: Shine the light, show the path so that with our reason we can see it and know what to do

What humans do: Walk on the path that Jesus Shows.

Summary: The Teachings of Jesus tell us how to live as Christians and good citizens

ATONEMENT THEORIES: **Jesus as MORAL EXAMPLE (Peter Abelard)**

(This is related to Teacher)

Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) _____

John 3:16 _____

John 3:17 _____

Human Predicament: Ignorance

What Jesus Does: Calls us to love our neighbor and our enemies; he teaches by example

What Humans Do: Follow Jesus' example.

Summary: Jesus Provides a moral example, with LOVE as the centerpiece, that we should copy.

(Ask about the Pelican Story)

ATONEMENT THEORIES: **Jesus as VICTORIOUS Champion & Liberator (Gustav Aulen)**

Revelation 12:7ff: _____

Revelation: 19:11-16 _____

Mark 10:45 _____

Human Predicament: Bondage to Evil: We are caught in the battle between forces of good and evil.

What Jesus Does: Defeats death and all enemies of God, all the forces of destruction and evil, including the devil and his legions. He liberates us from bondage to sin, death and the devil.

What Humans Do: By accepting God's Grace, we join our death to the death of Jesus, so that we can be connected with his resurrection.

Romans 6:4: _____

Summary: Jesus' victory over the powers of evil is available to be shared by us through the Holy Spirit in our baptism. We no longer have to be captive to their power, which has already been defeated.

ATONEMENT THEORIES: **Jesus as SATISFACTION (Anselm of Canterbury)**
(Substitution for punishment)

Romans 3:25: _____

John 10:11 The Good Shepherd: _____

Lamb of God: _____

Sometimes called the Judicial Theory. Assuming that the world as God created it was all in harmony and order, this theory is based on the idea that Divine Justice requires that when there is a breaking of the rules, there must be punishment.

God's order and rules can't be broken. Humans are not capable of fixing or paying for the damage.

Since God needs the rules to be upheld, he offers Jesus as the substitute for our sin and punishes him instead of us.

Human Predicament: Sin & Loss of Blessedness.

What Jesus Does: Jesus voluntarily dies and his blood pays the debt that humanity owes

What Humans Do: Accept the grace of Jesus' gift on our behalf and live gratefully.

Summary: While this is very popular and prevalent, here are some problems with this model:

- 1. Does a loving God really need to be appeased by sacrifice? If so, where is God's love in the midst of the anger about the broken rules?*
- 2. A more recent criticism: Is God a divine child abuser who sends his own child to die just to keep his rules in place?*

ATONEMENT THEORIES: **Jesus as Happy EXCHANGE (newer)**

Nicene Creed: _____

Jesus' healings and miracles embodied *ahead of time* the divine desire that all brokenness be healed. Within the limits of time, Jesus showed that God intends for us, and promises to give us.

Human Predicament: Sin & Loss of Blessedness

What Jesus Does: Jesus is the sacrifice which results in an exchange of attributes—as fully human and fully divine his attributes exchange with each other.

What Humans Do: This exchange of attributes can also happen within humans because of our baptism and God's grace.

Summary: Atonement = At-One-Ment. The change happens within God and therefore can happen within us. Lutherans believe that the finite can contain the infinite. Reformed traditions teach that this isn't possible so they are less likely to embrace this model.

ATONEMENT THEORIES: Jesus as Final SCAPEGOAT (Newer)

Jesus as High Priest: Hebrews 2:17_____

Leviticus 16:22 Day of Atonement: Scapegoat:_____.

_____.

Caiaphas, the high priest: John 11:50_____

Human Predicament: Self-Justification & Scapegoating (sacrificing someone else for our own self-preservation)

What Jesus Does: Jesus, in his death, reveals that God accepts no sacrifice from humans.

What Humans Do: We reject sacrifice and study the cross of Jesus to see how it reveals our own scapegoating.

Summary: God does not need to be appeased. The whole notion of sacrifice is a product of humans' desire to justify ourselves while making others suffer.

KEY

| Model | Human Predicament | Jesus' Work | Our Work |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Teacher | Ignorance | Teach the way | Follow the way |
| Moral Example | Ignorance | Teach God's Love | Copy Jesus & Live ethically |
| Victorious Champion | Bondage to Evil | Liberation from Bondage | Accept God's Grace |
| Satisfaction | Sin & Loss of Blessedness | Satisfaction of Cosmic Justice | Accept God's Grace |
| Happy Exchange | Sin & Loss of Blessedness | Exchange of Attributes | Exchange of Attributes |
| Final Scapegoat | Self-Justification & Scapegoating | Victimization of God's Son | Realization of Scapegoating & God's Justification |