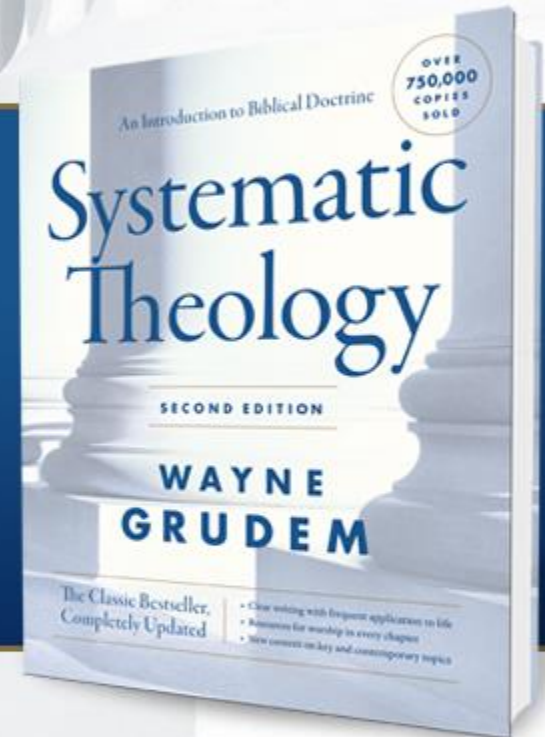


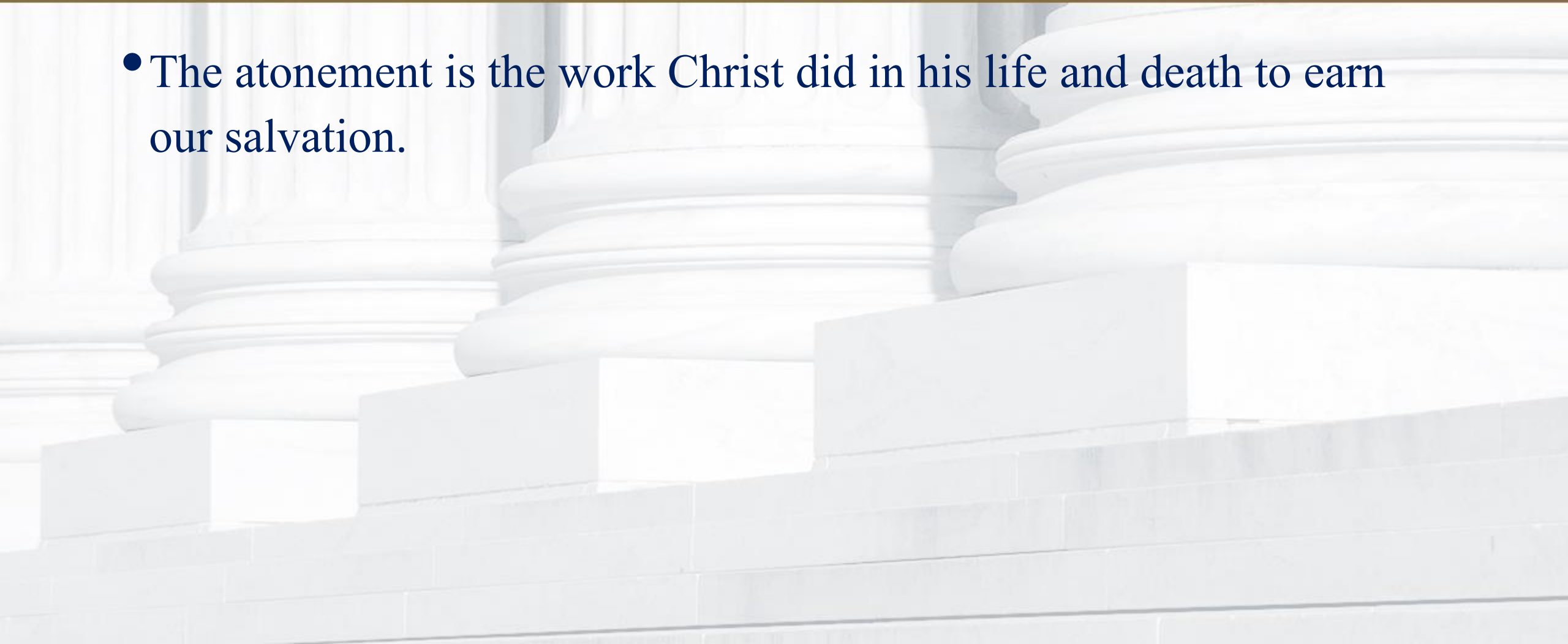
The Atonement

Chapter 27



Explanation and Scriptural Basis

- The atonement is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation.



The Cause of the Atonement

- The ultimate cause of the atonement is the love and justice of God.
 - **Jn 3:16:** For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.
 - **Rom 3:25–26:** ... whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The Necessity of the Atonement

- God did not need to save anyone at all. (2 Pet 2:4)
- The atonement is absolutely necessary as a *consequence* of God's decision to save some human beings. (Matt 26:39; Lk 24:25–27; Rom 3:26)

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's Obedience for Us

- Christ had to live a life of perfect obedience to God in order to earn righteousness for us. (Phil 3:9)
- His perfect obedience becomes our positive moral righteousness. (1 Cor 1:30)

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's Sufferings for Us

- **Suffering for His Whole Life:** Christ endured temptation, opposition, grief over the deaths of loved ones, and much more. (Isa 53:3)
- **The Pain of the Cross:**
 - *Physical Pain and Death*
 - *The Pain of Bearing Sin* (Isa 53:6; 2 Cor 5:21)
 - *Abandonment* (Mk 14:34–42, 50; Matt 27:46)
 - *Bearing the Wrath of God* – Jesus was a propitiation for our sins. (Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 Jn 2:2; 4:10)

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's Sufferings for Us

- **Further Understanding of the Death of Christ:**
 - *The Penalty Was Inflicted By God the Father* (2 Cor 5:21; Isa 53:6, 10; Rom 5:8)
 - *Not Eternal Suffering but Complete Payment* (Isa 53:11; Jn 19:30; Rom 8:1; Heb 9:25–28)
 - *The Meaning of the Blood of Christ* (1 Pet 1:18–19; Heb 9:14; 1 Jn 1:7; Rev 12:10–11)
 - *Christ's Death as "Penal Substitution"* – He bore a penalty in our place.

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's Sufferings for Us

- **Some Recent Denials of Penal Substitutionary Atonement:**

- Steve Chalke:

- Calls it “morally dubious” and a “huge barrier to faith”
 - Fails to address the verses previously quoted and does not deal with the argument in Romans 1–3 that God’s justice requires that sin must be punished

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's Sufferings for Us

- **Some Recent Denials of Penal Substitutionary Atonement:**

- Joel Green & Mark Baker:

- Call it “unbiblical” and argue that it could be misinterpreted as “divine child abuse”
 - Also fail to engage arguments from Scripture in favor of the penal substitutionary view
 - The possibility that a doctrine can be misinterpreted is not an argument against the truth of the doctrine

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's sufferings for Us

- **New Testament Terms Describing Different Aspects of the Atonement:**
 - *Sacrifice*: We deserve to die, but he died. (Heb 9:26)
 - *Propitiation*: We deserve God's wrath, but he bore it. (1 Jn 4:10)
 - *Reconciliation*: We are separated from God, but he reconciled us to the Father. (2 Cor 5:18–19)
 - *Redemption*: We are in bondage to sin, but he has freed us. (Mk 10:45; 1 Jn 5:19; Heb 2:14–15)

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's Sufferings for Us

- **Other Views of the Atonement:**

- *The Ransom to Satan Theory* – The view that Christ paid the ransom to Satan.
- *The Moral Influence Theory* – The view that Christ died to teach us about God's love.
- *The Example Theory* – The view that Christ died to teach us to trust God.
- *The Governmental Theory* – The view that Christ died to show us how bad sin is.

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's sufferings for Us

- **Did Christ Descend Into Hell?**

- *The Origin of the Phrase, “He Descended Into Hell”* – It first appeared in AD 650
- *Possible Biblical Support for a Descent Into Hell:*
 - **Acts 2:27** – The term translated “hell” in the KJV is actually “grave.”
 - **Rom 10:6–7** – The term “abyss” refers to the sea. (cf. Deut 30:11–13)

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's Sufferings for Us

- **Did Christ Descend Into Hell?**

- *Possible Biblical Support for a Descent Into Hell:*

- **Eph 4:8–9** – This phrase should be translated “lower, earthly regions.”
 - **1 Pet 3:18–20** – This passage likely describes Christ preaching through Noah to those who are now in hell.
 - **1 Pet 4:6** – This likely means that the gospel was preached to those who are now dead, not that they had a second chance after death. (Heb 9:27)

The Nature of the Atonement: Christ's Sufferings for Us

- **Did Christ Descend Into Hell?**

- *Biblical Opposition to a “Descent Into Hell”*

- Lk 23:43

- Jn 19:30

- Lk 23:46

- *Conclusion Regarding the Apostles' Creed and the Question of Christ's Possible Descent Into Hell*

- The phrase should not be retained.

- Christ did not descend into hell.

The Extent of the Atonement

- **Scripture Passages Used to Support the Reformed View:**
 - **Jn 10:11:** I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. (cf. Jn 10:15)
 - **Acts 20:28:** Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.
 - **Rom 8:32–33:** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.

The Extent of the Atonement

- **Scripture Passages Used to Support the Reformed View:**
 - **Jn 17:9:** I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours.
 - **Jn 17:20:** I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word ...

The Extent of the Atonement

- **Scripture Passages Used to Support Unlimited Atonement:**
 - **Jn 1:29:** The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”
 - **2 Cor 5:19:** that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
 - **1 Tim 2:6:** who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.

The Extent of the Atonement

- **Scripture Passages Used to Support Unlimited Atonement:**
 - **1 Jn 2:2:** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
 - **2 Pet 2:1:** But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, *even denying the Master who bought them*, bringing upon themselves swift destruction.

The Extent of the Atonement

- **Some Points of Agreement and Some Conclusions:**
 - Not all will be saved.
 - A free offer of the gospel can rightly be made to every person ever born. It is completely true that “whoever will” may come to Christ for salvation, and no one who comes to him will be turned away.
 - All agree that Christ’s death in itself, because he is the infinite Son of God, has infinite merit and is in itself sufficient to pay the penalty of the sins of as many or as few as the Father and the Son decreed.

The Extent of the Atonement

- **Some Points of Agreement and Some Conclusions:**
 - Yet, several passages speaking about “the world” simply mean that sinners generally will be saved.
 - The gospel makes Christ’s sacrifice available to everyone.
 - Peter is not stating that Christ redeemed false prophets, but he is describing rebellious church attendees with an allusion to Deut 32:6, which describes rebellious members of Israel.
 - In conclusion, it seems “particular redemption” is most consistent with Scripture.

The Extent of the Atonement

- **Points of Clarification and Caution:**

- We should not focus on the purpose of the atonement, but on what actually happened.
- “Christ died for his people only” and “Christ died for all people” are both true in different senses.

The Extent of the Atonement

- **Points of Clarification and Caution:** Persons holding either view agree at several points:
 - No one will be saved without believing in Christ.
 - Christ does not reject any who come to him. (Jn 6:37)
 - God is not insincere in his free offer of the gospel.
 - While one side seems to be true, Scripture does not emphasize this issue, so we should take care.

Special Terms

- active obedience
- atonement
- blood of Christ
- consequent absolute necessity
- example theory
- general redemption
- governmental theory
- impute
- limited atonement
- moral influence theory
- particular redemption
- passive obedience
- penal substitution
- propitiation
- ransom to Satan theory
- reconciliation
- redemption
- sacrifice
- unlimited atonement
- vicarious atonement