

Lesson 15

Part Five – Anthropology and Hamartiology: The Doctrines of Man and Sin (Cont'd)

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- II. The Doctrine of Sin
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 - a. Definition
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 - a. Pelagian View
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 - c. Federal View
 - d. Augustinian or Seminal View
- V. The Christian and Sin**
 - a. The Conflict
 - i. The World

The Christian conflict with sin, according to 1 John 2:16, arises from three areas. The first of these is the world. In Scripture, the word “world” very often denotes that which is hostile to God, lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine, ruined, and depraved. In 1 John 2:15, believers are warned not to love the world nor the things in the world. This indicates that there’s both a material element as well as a philosophy to be shunned (we call this a worldview). This world is under the control of Satan (1 John 5:19) and manifests itself in foolishness (1 Corinthians 3:19), immorality (1 Corinthians 5:10), and hostility toward God (James 4:4). The Christian is to reckon that he has been crucified with regard to the world (Galatians 6:14).

ii. The Flesh

The flesh (Gk. *sarx*) is the willing instrument of sin, and is subject to sin to such a degree that wherever flesh is, all forms of sin are likewise present, and no good thing can live in the *sarx*. The term “flesh” may be used in a material sense; however it’s frequently given a nonmaterial meaning to refer to the “old nature of the flesh... that capacity which all men have to serve and please self... the capacity to leave God out of one’s life.” As a capacity for sin, the flesh is described in Paul’s Christian experience in Romans 7:17-20. It involves lust and controls the mind (Ephesians 2:3); it governs the life of the non-Christian (Romans 8:5-6). The solution to the dilemma of Romans 7:25 is the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:2ff.) and a renewed mind (Romans 12:1) that reckons the flesh crucified (Romans 6:6).

iii. The Devil

The devil is a real, personal being who opposes the Christian and seeks to make him ineffective in his Christian life. He is a formidable enemy of the Christian since he is intent on devouring Christians (1 Peter 5:8); hence, the Christian is called on to resist the devil (James 4:7). This can be accomplished through putting on the full armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17).

b. The Provision

i. The Word of God

God has made ample provision for the Christian to keep him from the path of sin. First, He's given us His word. We have a God-breathed Bible that's profitable for "training in righteousness" that the believer may be equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It is this word of God that can keep the believer from a life of sin (Psalm 119:9-16); it's this word that cleanses the believer (Ephesians 5:26), sanctifies the believer (John 17:17), and aids in answer to prayer (John 15:7).

ii. The Intercession of Christ

Christ is the believer's advocate or defense attorney when the believer commits sin (1 John 2:1). Because Christ continually lives, His intercession is effective (Hebrews 7:25). John 17 reveals the nature of Christ's intercession for Christians: He prays for their security (17:11), concerning their joy (17:13), for their protection from Satan (17:15), for their being set apart in the truth (17:17), and that they might ultimately be with Christ (17:24).

iii. Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit's ministry in the believer's life is crucial regarding a life of separation from sin. The Spirit's ministry involves indwelling (Romans 8:9), anointing (1 John 2:20; 4:4), sealing (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30), empowering (Acts 1:8), filling (Ephesians 5:18), and enabling the believer to live constantly by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16).

Part Six – Soteriology: The Doctrine of Salvation

I. False Theories on the Atonement

a. Ransom to Satan Theory

- Origen (A.D. 185-254)
- Taught that Satan held people captive as a victor in war
- Held by Augustine (a disciple of Origen in many areas)
- Reasoned that, because Satan held people captive, a ransom had to be paid, not to God, but to Satan

In response to this theory, it must be understood that God's holiness, not Satan's, was offended and a payment (ransom) had to be made to God to avert His wrath. Furthermore, Satan did not have the power to free man; God alone has this power.

This theory is also false because it makes Satan the benefactor of Christ's death. This view has too high a view of Satan; the cross was a judgment **of** him, not a ransom **to** him.

b. Recapitulation Theory

- Advanced by Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200)
- Taught that Christ went through all the phases of Adam's life and experience, including the experience of sin. In this way, Christ was able to succeed where Adam had failed
- There is an element of truth to this theory, albeit a small one. Christ is in fact known as the "Last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45), however, Christ had no personal encounter with sin whatsoever (1 John 3:5; John 8:46). The theory is incomplete in that it neglects the atonement; it's the **death** of Christ that saves, not His **life**.

c. Commercial Theory

- Advanced by Anselm (A.D. 1033-1109)
- Taught that, through sin, God was robbed of the honor that was due Him
- This necessitated a resolution that could be achieved either through punishing sinners or through satisfaction
- God chose to resolve the matter through satisfaction by the gift of His Son
- Through His death Christ brought honor to God and received a reward, which He passed on to sinners
- The gift was forgiveness for the sinner and eternal life for those who live by the gospel
- Though this view changed the focus from payment to Satan to a proper emphasis on payment to God, it still has problems:
 - o It emphasizes God's mercy at the expense of other attributes of God, namely, justice and holiness
 - o It neglects the obedience of the life of Christ
 - o It ignores the vicarious suffering of Christ. Rather than emphasizing Christ died for the penalty of sin, this view embraces the Roman Catholic concept of penance

d. Moral Influence Theory

- Advanced by Abelard (A.D. 1079-1142)
- Taught by modern liberals such as Horace Bushnell and others of a more "moderate" liberal stance
- Originally presented as a reaction to the commercial theory

- Taught that the death of Christ was not necessary as an expiation for sin, rather, through the death of Christ, God demonstrated His love for humanity in such a way that sinners hearts would be softened and brought to repentance
- The weaknesses of this view are obvious:
 - o The basis for the death of Christ is His love rather than holiness
 - o Teaches that somehow the moving of people's emotions will lead them to repentance
- Remember, Scripture affirms that the death of Christ was substitutionary, and thereby the sinner is justified before a holy God, not merely influenced by a demonstration of love

I would argue that this is a view widely held by many today (discuss).

e. Accident Theory

- A more recent view, advocated by Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965)
- Taught that Christ became enamored with His messiahship
- Christ preached the coming kingdom and was mistakenly or accidentally crushed in the process
- Schweitzer saw no value to others in Christ's death
- What are the errors with this view?

f. Example (Martyr) Theory

- A reaction to the Reformers, this theory was first advocated by the Socinians in the 16th century and more recently by the Unitarians
- This view, which is a more liberal view than the moral influence view, suggests the death of Christ was unnecessary in atoning for sin
- Sin didn't need to be punished
- There is no relationship between the salvation of sinners and Christ's death
- Christ was merely an example of obedience to the point of death that ought to inspire people to reform and live as Christ lived

Scripture repeatedly speaks of the need for substitutionary atonement. Also, 1 Peter 2:21 teaches that Christ's example was for believers, not unbelievers.

g. Governmental Theory

- Advanced by Grotius (1583-1645)
- Taught as a reaction to the example theory of Socinus
- Served as a compromise between the example theory and the view of the Reformers
- Grotius taught that God forgives sinners without requiring an equivalent payment
- Grotius reasoned that Christ upheld the principle of government in God's law by making a token payment for sin through His death. God accepted the token payment of Christ,

set aside the requirement of the law, and was able to forgive sinners because the principle of His government had been upheld

- Problems:
 - o God is subject to change; He threatens but doesn't carry out (in fact changes) the sentence
 - o God forgives sin without payment for sin
 - o No substitutionary atonement necessary

II. Correct Understanding of the Atonement

a. Substitution

The death of Christ was substitutionary – He died in the stead of sinners and in their place. This is also described as vicarious from the Latin “vicarius” meaning “one in place of another.” The death of Christ is vicarious in the sense that Christ is the Substitute who bears the punishment rightly due sinners, their guilt being imputed to Him in such a way that He representatively bore their punishment. There are many passages which emphasize this (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24); Hebrews 9:28; Isaiah 53:4-6).

b. Redemption

The word “redemption comes from the Greek word “agorazo” and means “to purchase in the marketplace. The word is used to describe the believer being purchased out of the slave market of sin and set free from sin’s bondage. The purchase price for the believer’s freedom and release from sin was the death of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23; Revelation 5:9; 14:3, 4). It’s important to note that we are not advocating for Origen’s “ransom theory.” We were purchased from our sinful state, the price being paid to God as a means of satisfying His wrath, not to Satan.

c. Reconciliation

The emphasis of reconciliation is that of making peace with God. Man who was estranged from God is brought into communion with God. Sin had created a barrier between man and God and rendered man at enmity with Him (Isaiah 59:1-2; Colossians 1:21, 22; James 4:4). Through Christ that enmity and the wrath of God was removed (Romans 5:10). Reconciliation may thus be defined as “God removing the barrier of sin, producing peace and enabling man to be saved.”

d. Propitiation

Propitiation means that the death of Christ fully satisfied all the righteous demands of God toward the sinner. Because God is holy and righteous He cannot overlook sin; through the work of Jesus Christ God is fully satisfied that His righteous standard has now been met.

It is our union with Christ which allows us to be accepted by God and be spared from His wrath. The Old Testament word “kaphar” means “to cover”; it involved a ritual covering for sin (Leviticus 4:35; 10:17). The Greek verb “hilaskomai” meaning “to propitiate,” occurs twice in the New Testament. In Luke 18:13 the repentant tax collector prayed for God to be propitiated, or that God would provide a covering for sin. In Hebrews 2:17 it declares that Christ has made propitiation for sin.

e. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the legal act of God whereby He removes any charges that were held against the sinner because proper satisfaction or atonement for those sins has been made. It is the act of God whereby He cancels our debt (Colossians 2:13). The context emphasizes that our debts were nailed to the cross, with Christ’s atonement freely forgiving the sins that were charged against us. The beauty of God’s forgiveness is that it spans all sins: past, present, and future. This, however, is distinct from the daily cleansing from sin that is necessary if we are to maintain fellowship with God (1 John 1:9).

f. Justification

Whereas forgiveness is the negative side of salvation (in other words, it involves the removal of any charges that may have been pending over us), justification is the positive side. To justify is to declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. It is a forensic (legal) act of God whereby He declares the believing sinner righteous on the basis of the blood of Christ. When we are declared justified by God, again, it is not the result of anything that we ourselves have done, but solely on the basis of Christ’s righteousness having been imputed (or posted to) our accounts.

Next up? The Extent of the Atonement