

The Definite Atonement of Christ

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[0 : 00] Welcome. We're glad you're here.

And also welcome to those who are at home that may be watching this.! We're glad you're watching. We look forward when you'll be back with us.

Pastor Mike is out of town. We'll be back Wednesday for the Wednesday service and then be back in the pulpit next Sunday. So if you're a visitor, don't judge us on me.

Come back and listen to Pastor Mike when he's here. The very centerpiece of Christianity is the death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, and present-day intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I could also add it to that, and he's coming back. The death of Christ accomplished the realization of God's eternal purposes.

[1 : 24] Of course, a vital part of the eternal purpose of God is the salvation of sinners. Aren't we glad? And when I use the term God, I am speaking of the God of the universe and the God of the Bible who has revealed himself as and in the three persons of the Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

These three are the one true God. They are three distinct persons, but are in one essence, and that essence, of course, is divine. It's holy.

The Lord Jesus Christ carried out the atoning sacrifice for our sins on the cross.

He shed his blood for his people, and without the shedding of blood, there can be no forgiveness of sin. That is clearly taught in Scripture.

It is important to note here that in the atonement provided by Christ, people were actually saved.

[2 : 51] Now, I realize I'm talking to the choir here, but you have to make that statement in our day. People were actually saved.

This is vital to our understanding of God and his plan for his people now and in the ages to come, excuse me, in the ages to come, if we have any ages to come.

Many in the church throughout history and especially in our day have missed this cardinal truth.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross actually saved specific people. Many over the centuries have believed and taught that the sacrifice of Christ on the cross only made salvation possible for everyone but without actually saving anyone.

in that erroneous model, Christ died and after the resurrection backed off to see if anyone would actually take advantage of his sacrifice by getting themselves saved.

[4 : 12] Under this scenario, everyone might get saved or no one might get saved. It is left up to the individual to decide.

In that theology, the individual is the ultimate determiner of his or her salvation. The word of God does not teach that in any form or fashion.

Instead, the Bible teaches that all humans are dead and trespasses and sins. A physically dead person can't get himself or herself out of the grave any more than a spiritually dead person can get himself or herself out of lostness and into eternal life.

Let me add a parenthetical point here. If my salvation is dependent upon me, I am most to be pitied. I am totally incapable of either getting myself saved or keeping myself saved. For that to happen, I and all of us must depend totally upon the triune God of the universe.

[5 : 36] But the good news is that the atonement of Christ on the cross of Calvary did actually save. People were saved from every tribe, kindred, language, and nation.

All whom the Father intended to save have been or will be saved. As expressed in the inerrant words of Ephesians 1.11, the people saved have been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.

In saving certain sinners from eternal death and bringing them into a state of eternal life, God stayed true to his character.

even while providing love and mercy, God in no way compromised his righteousness and justice. At no time has God ever winked at sin. At no time has God ever told the sinner, it's okay, it's okay, you're alright.

[6 : 51] never did God say my love is so great, we're just going to ignore your failures, ignore your transgressions. He did something altogether different.

He took all the sins of his people and placed those sins directly upon his son, the sin bearer. the scriptures teach that God imputed our sins to his son and imputed his son's righteousness to us. I'm sometimes asked, why didn't God just save anybody? I'm sorry, everybody. Why didn't God just save everybody? That's the wrong question.

That's the wrong question to ask. The more appropriate question is, why did God save anybody? Now, there's a question that we can chew on a while.

[8 : 01] This is especially poignant given the fact that the rebellious were saved at the cost of his dear son's life. The reformers and the Puritans used an expression that is most helpful.

They referred to the work of Christ on the cross, as not just an atonement, but a definite atonement. Why did they refer to it as a definite atonement? Well, they did so because it definitely saved.

People definitely got saved.

God could not and would not ever compromise on his righteousness and the perfect life and atoning death of his son was the sinless Jesus Christ.

He personified that righteousness. The father offered his son so that he might remain just even while declaring guilty sinners to be righteous and without blame.

[9 : 13] there is a word for that. It is called justification. It is an essential of salvation. Justification is defined as a declaration that a person has been restored to a state of righteousness through belief and trust in the work of Christ rather than on the basis of one's own accomplishments.

Those two words belief and trust are the same word in the Greek New Testament. They are translated faith. Faith.

And faith is a grace gift given to God's chosen vessels so we can believe. Read Ephesians 2.8 For by grace are you saved through faith that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest anyone should boast.

On the cross God the father treated his son as the ugliest and most vile sinner that ever lived and he treated those being saved as sinless.

Paul expresses this most beautifully in 2nd Corinthians 5.21 for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God as a consequence of the death of Christ and remember to include all those other things in addition to his death such as burial resurrection etc.

[11 : 00] millions of people have been delivered from the just punishment they deserve millions the death of Christ was the actual accomplishment of redemption largely through the teachings and writings of the apostles it brought about the realization of the eternal purposes of God let us dig deeper into what the definite atonement of Christ accomplished first the death of Jesus was a priestly sacrifice for sinners it was a priestly sacrifice in the Old Testament we are exposed very early to the office of high priest in

Israel you can read about that in Exodus you can read about it all over Leviticus the high priest you may recall was charged with the duty of offering sacrifices for specific people he offered such sacrifices first for himself then for his family and finally for the people of Israel he did not offer sacrifices!

for Egyptians he didn't do it for Philistine any other people group in other words it was not an indiscriminate offering when entered the Holy of Holies on the day of atonement in Hebrew that is known as Yom Kippur he had on his breastplate the names of the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel this was a specific offering for a specific people and by the way in Hebrew Yom means day and Kippur means the atonement that's where we get the day of the atonement now when he entered into the temple it was a 24 hour ritual by the way there were seven washings he had all kinds of things he had to go through they even tied a rope on him because if he did it wrong and God struck him dead which has happened talk to Nadab and Abihu someday they offered unholy fire God struck them dead they had to tie a rope on him to reel him out like a fish because they

couldn't go in after him they'd be struck dead and once in there it was a bloody ritual he offered bulls and rams and sheep and lambs and pigeons and other animals that was the high priest of Israel a human high priest on Calvary Jesus our great high priest didn't offer any sacrifices for himself he was sinless he was the sacrifice big difference between Leviticus and the New Testament likewise when the great high priest sacrificed and when the great high priest the Lord Jesus was sacrificed on the cross his was a specific offering for a particular people group it was very specific it was all who would be brought to faith from different parts of the world and those lived even in different time periods on this earth this is most apparent when Jesus offered his sacrifice of intercessory prayer a few hours before the cross we find this prayer in the 17th chapter of John's gospel it is called the great interterrian prayer it was a prayer from the son to the father recorded in scripture and guess what when we read that prayer we get to listen in read it often that's an inter trinitarian conversation we're the fly on the wall we get to listen in if you want to hear from [15 : 54] God read the Bible if you want to hear him out loud read it out loud he speaks to us through the Bible and only through the Bible I may add note the specific objects of our Lord's prayer of intercession John 17 2 you have given me authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given me in John 17 6 I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world John 17 17 8 for I have given them the words that you gave me and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you and they have believed that you sent me John 17 9 I am praying for them and listen to this

I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me and then this one you know you're in the Bible John 17 20 I do not ask for these only but also for those who will believe me through their word whose word the apostles the writers of the New Testament people are still being brought to Christ to believe in him as he said that would happen in John 17 that's us that's us this prayer was given mere hours before the atoning death of Jesus on the cross he's on his way to Calvary he knows where he's headed it should be readily apparent that the Lord was talking in this prayer about a definite atonement it was directed not to the world but to those individuals who were given to Jesus by the father for the purpose of dying in their place the theological term for this by the way is the substitutionary atonement obviously it is directly connected to his priestly work of sacrifice his life was presented as a sacrifice for the same people for whom he has been praying in the intercessory work of John 17 some of the people for whom he was praying are in this room right now and others heard the prayer they were in the room with Jesus so it spanned 2000 years but here's the point of all this the priestly prayer and sacrifice actually accomplished salvation for his people and these were the very ones given to him by the father now how confident was the father and the son this was going to happen so confident that before the world began they wrote all their names down in the lamb's book of life before the foundation of the world before there was a universe before there was a planet earth before there were angels before there were people from the foundation of the world written down in the lamb's book of life and none have been added of that number and none taken away that is the whole point of the substitutionary death of the

Lord Jesus Christ he gave his life a ransom for those who had been given to him by the father and their names are written down we had a woman when she was young she graduated from college and she was valedictorian she gave the speech at graduation at a university that didn't believe in your name being written down they thought you handled all that and she got up there and she said we basically believe the same thing I'm a Baptist you're not we basically believe the same thing except our names are written in ink and yours are in pencil I told Diane I would never say that so what did the atoning work of Christ achieve and sadly a lot of people would answer that question well it made salvation possible but it really didn't save anyone to counter that claim we have the words of

Christ starting in the 13th chapter of John going through John 17 and then when we get to 18 he's on his way to the garden and to the cross and those chapters make it abundantly clear that the sacrifice of Christ accomplished the salvation of those whom the Father had given him if you're a believer in Christ and have been saved by him through regeneration justification and sanctification then you can know for sure that when he was on the cross you were on his mind sound like the beginning of a nice song and again I repeat my first point of the message the death of Jesus was a priestly!

[21 : 54] sacrifice for sinners my second point is this the death of Jesus was a propitiation removing the wrath of God from sinners when I meditate I think often of the publican not the republican the publican and the Pharisee who came to the temple to pray listen to their conversation and I've expanded this a little bit from the notes so two men went up into the temple to pray one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector the Pharisee standing by himself prayed thus can't you just hear him God I'll try to pontificate God I thank you that I'm not like other men extortioners unjust adulterers or even like this tax collector

I fast twice a week I give tithes of all that I get but the tax collector standing far off would not even lift his eyes to heaven but beat his breast saying God be merciful to me a sinner and listen to Jesus this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled but the one who humbles himself will be exalted Jesus came to humble those who needed it and to exalt those who already had it it is most interesting that the publican in crying out to God in the Greek language said

God be propitious toward me a sinner although we don't use that word in English much anymore he rightly saw himself as the object of God's wrath directed toward him and it was a righteous wrath he knew it what about the Pharisee well Paul has something to tell us in Romans chapter 1 verse 18 about him God's righteous wrath has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men when Jesus hung on the cross he received the full measure of the father's wrath reserved for sinners it was wrath the Lord even cried out in Matthew's gospel my God my God why have you forsaken me sin received the full fury of an offended holy God at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ but when sin received the just judgment of God's righteousness right at this crucial moment whose sins were they we know it was not any sin of Jesus he had no sin he had no sin this is by the way opposite of what CNN news announced last Friday the commentator Don Lemon said we all know that Jesus was not sinless when he was on the earth that statement was made on live broadcast what do the scriptures say 1st Peter 2 22 Jesus committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth the Lord died for a multitude of sinners from every tribe kindred and tongue his acts on the cross propitiated the wrath of God and regrettably we don't use that word anymore much propitiation is no longer in our language so what does it mean the Lord's sacrifice was an appeasement the Lord's sacrifice was a satisfaction the atonement of Christ completely satisfied excuse me I'll start that over the atonement of Christ completely satisfied the wrath of God directed at sinners a few years ago Paul Worsher great pastor great minister had a one week revival at a church and first that Sunday morning he preached a message similar to this I didn't copy his I copied!

[27 : 12] someone else it wasn't his it wasn't John MacArthur and the pastor went to his hotel room at 2 o'clock that afternoon and he said did you say that Jesus was put on the cross to appease the wrath of God and did you say then that God put his son on the cross to do that he said yeah he said well your week is over with us don't come back and Paul said is there a problem he said well yeah we don't believe that well what do you believe well God didn't put Jesus on the cross Satan did he said yeah I probably am not going to come back and he did okay we understand all this it was a satisfaction but was it a satisfaction for all sinners no it was the sinners God the father gave him as detailed in John chapter 17 we've already read for whomever the

Lord appeased they're going to be in glory and not everybody's going to be in glory beloved the bible teach that Jesus talked more about hell than he talked about heaven in that prayer Jesus even told the father he was not praying for the world but those whom the father gave him out of the world well let's offer a little further proof for whom Christ died listen to these words from the 10th chapter of John's gospel John chapter 10 verses 14 to 17 I am the good shepherd not me that's Jesus talking I am the good shepherd I know my own and my own know me just as the father knows me and I know the father and I laid down my life for the sheep and

I have other sheep that are not of this fold who are they or they're called Gentiles this is a Jewish audience I must bring them also and they will listen to my voice so there will be one flock one shepherd for this reason the father loves me because I laid down my life that I may take it up again Jesus appeased he died on the cross for his sheep and does Jesus know his sheep he even calls them by name and when he calls his sheep his sheep respond we learned this in Sunday school this morning listen to a tape by Steve Lawson but in the Middle East the sheep follow the shepherd and they put their sheep into a common fold for the night and then the next day the shepherd shows up and he calls his sheep by name and

I don't know their names Ted Paul Wes I don't I'm making that up but the sheep hear that and they come to the shepherd in America we drive the sheep with a staff and a dog not so in the Middle East it's beautiful to watch it's beautiful to watch he calls them my name Jesus is one day going to call you by name Jesus died to propitiate appease and satisfy the wrath of God toward the sins of his human sheep who would be saved the proof that God accepted the Lord's sacrifice and was satisfied is the resurrection of Christ he died he came out of the tomb alive that's the proof my third point is this I only got four so don't panic in his death Jesus redeemed sinners by paying the price for their sins and thus purchasing them for himself were owned by the shepherd were sheep owned by the shepherd every human has accrued to himself or herself an unpayable load of sin we call this the sin debt we can't pay for even one of our sins much less a lifetime of sin we can't pay for it it would take eternity for us to pay for one sin we can't do it when

I speak of sin I mean all of them we're talking about sins of commission and sins of omission we're talking about sins of thought sins of word sins of deed one sin makes us a debtor to God imagine all of them piled on that's why it's unpayable it's unpayable Christ paid he atoned for all of the sins of those whom the father gave him but he even died for the sins of unbelief everybody he died for at one time was not a believer and he died for the sins of unbelief of which accrued perhaps for many years I know a lot of you were saved as children a lot of you in here others like me were saved later I was around 30 years of age with an unimaginable debt load of sin and

[33 : 07] Jesus atoned for them all Jesus achieved a definite atonement for all the accumulated sins of all his people you can be sure that Jesus died for his sheep and he knows them by name my fourth point is this the death of Jesus purchased an abiding reconciliation between an offended God and an offending sinner an abiding reconciliation when two people need to be reconciled that means they are at enmity with each other now our Christian brother Noah Webster who wrote the first dictionary he said in his first dictionary published in 1828 I have a copy not antique copy but a modern reprint he said in his dictionary that enmity is the quality of being enemies with each other and as

Webster famously did in his dictionaries they don't do it now he further defined those words or that particular word enmity by quoting from the holy bible can you imagine doing it today no one would publish it here are three verses he used to further define enmity genesis 3 15 I will put enmity between you and the woman he told that to the serpent to Satan Romans 8 7 the carnal mind is enmity against God and then James 4 4 friendship with the world and that's the world system Satan system is enmity with God it can be accurately said that when two people are at enmity with each other they are at war with each other they need to be at peace because of our sins we were at war with

God but guess what the cross of Christ is the peace treaty that's the peace treaty and this peace treaty was signed in blood his blood it is not just our enmity against God it's not just that it comes to an end it is that our enmity against God and God's enmity against sinners are removed they're gone at reconciliation God takes all of our sins and casts them as far as the east is from the west now how far is that you might ask that's infinity that's infinity if we start walking north eventually we're going to be walking south aren't we and take a coat because you're going be at the north pole and then you're going to start walking south to the south pole let me tell you when you start walking west you never come to the east it's always west it's infinity through the death of

Christ the father has been reconciled to a host of people from every tribe kindred nation at the same time we have been reconciled to him if you and your own spirit have been reconciled to God it was because he first reconciled to you if you love Christ it is because he first loved you so what has the death of Christ accomplished his death provided a sufficient priestly service it also accomplished an effective propitiation by removing the righteous wrath of God aimed at sinners it provided full redemption by the purchase of a people it provided a genuine reconciliation by removing God's enmity toward his children who are now in Christ by the definite atonement of

Christ that was provided to all who would believe the grace gifts of faith repentance justification and sanctification these are all essentials to possessing a saved life and without all four eternal life doesn't occur they're essentials so what is our conclusion this morning let me make five brief points first of all come to Jesus is that profound come to Jesus the Bible says whosoever will let him come if your conscience has been pricked this morning and deep down you know I have never really come to Jesus do so this morning come to him have all your sins paid for by

[38 : 53] Christ Christ died listen to this Christ died for all who will come come and all for whom he died will come John 6 guarantees that they will be drawn there by the father if you are one of those come come listen to the words of Jesus John 6 37 all that the father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never cast out John 6 44 no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him John 6 45 everyone who has heard and learned from the father comes to me and when the crowd saw this they said this is a hard saying and many followed him no more they left they walked away from a salvation offered my second point is this if you're a believer be humbled be humbled you did not generate your own faith your faith by which in

God's mind you are already saved was purchased at the infinite cost of Christ through his suffering on the cross if you won't take time to be humble now you will make time to be humble in heaven I believe when we see the Lord in heaven I believe we will see still scars on his feet and scars on his hands of a truth we will say I put those there Tom Holland put those there if that's not most humbling then there's no such thing as humility three be unshaken in your assurance your faith unto salvation was generated by the triune God and by his infinite grace you will persevere to the end you will persevere the reformers used that term the puritans came along and said they liked perseverance they even like preservation more

God will preserve his own to the end and by the way there is no end number four treasure the gospel treasure the gospel leave this pace with the gospel on your heart on your mind and on your lips let's be honest there are people in your circle of friends and family just as there are in mine who need to hear what Christ has done on Calvary they need to hear that you have family members that need to hear that now don't manipulate someone into a decision don't manipulate them into a decision give them the truth of the gospel and then let God the Holy Spirit do his work and lastly give all glory to

God the glory belongs to God some will believe many will reject but through it all God will be glorified when God commissioned Isaiah to go and spread the gospel message he warned Isaiah that only one in ten would believe but was God still glorified absolutely how is he glorified by our witness and the work accomplished he is glorified by the death of his son which has provided salvation to millions anytime I pray I start out father of the Lord Jesus Christ God is glorified by that by his son whom he sent to be the propitiation for our sins

Thank you.