Sadly, the terminology used in a discussion of the Calvary/atonement is by its very nature philosophical and probably sounds muddled. Was Jesus punished for our sins? Punishment is often a synonym for God’s judgment in the Bible but not the result of God loosing His temper [That’s a heathen or pagan idea].

**Atonement**

A man named, William Tyndale, who lived in the 16th century, while translating the Bible into English, was at a loss to explain how the Savior’s death on the Cross brought us back to God. Tyndale, like others since him, had found that the Bible doesn’t always make sense to the people of other cultures and languages. Atonement is from the Latin for “unity.”

The dictionary defines it as, “the reconciliation of God and humankind through Jesus Christ”

John Stott, said, , “…the meaning of the atonement is not to be found in our penitence evoked by the sight of Calvary, but rather in what God did when in Christ on the cross he took our place and bore our sin.”

> We may not know, we cannot tell,<br>What pains he had to bear;<br>But we believe it was for us<br>He hung and suffered there.

C. S. Lewis writing to a friend who asked if the Atonement was actually taught by our Lord, volunteered: “… surely, since we know from the Epistles that the Apostles (who had actually known Him) did teach this doctrine in His name immediately after His death, it is clear that He did teach it: or else, that they allowed themselves a very freehand.” Lewis deduced, “Surely the history of the human mind hangs together better if you suppose that all this was the first shadowy approach of something whose reality came with Christ—even if we can't at present fully understand that something.”

**Sacrifices**

Hebrews 8:4-5 “The shadow of heavenly things. Cp. chart

**Theories**

Theories of atonement have been developed to explain Jesus’ death in some reasonable way. Calvary was the place, the Hill, outside the city of Jerusalem in Israel, where He died. There is so much here to unwrap and this book is burdened with the task of doing just that:

1  Stott. 15
2  Stott. 80
3  Lewis. 33. To Arthur Greeves, January 10, 1932
Metaphors and analogies.

- The blind men and the elephant
- The coin (sin (temporal, the act) & sinfulness – our nature before Christ.
  - God wrote the code of His holiness on tablets before Jesus; After Calvary, He wrote it on the human heart. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. “A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.” Luke 6:45

Threefold Reason for Jesus’ Crucifixion

- Because He loved us. Calvary shows how much God loved us because He was willing to die for us. He inspires us, in turn, to love on a higher level. We were apathetic when it came to His love for us. Calvary offers us a new life in Christ (John 3:16).
- Because we were sinners. Jesus had to die if we were to be forgiven because sin against God is punishable only by death. He died in our place because we were, indeed, guilty. Calvary satisfies God’s justice.

  1. Isaiah 53:1). “After he has suffered, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.”

- Because Satan needed to be defeated. Jesus’ death had something to do with some unseen, spiritual, war being fought between God and Satan. In some mysterious way, difficult at best to understand, this war had to be fought for the souls of humankind. When He overcame the evil one to whom we were in bondage (we all surely know how strong temptation can be to do or say something regrettable or indiscreet) we were set free to serve God by doing or saying the right thing (Romans 6:6;

  1. Colossians 2:15). And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism had evolved as a world-weary intellectualism that no longer viewed life in terms of absolutes or universal principles. Since WW2 and the Holocaust educated minds have questioned allegiance to all law codes. They are re-evaluating what society expects of them in terms of their own quest for happiness. Joe Griffin, Co-Founder of the Human Givens approach to psychotherapy, wrote, “Some postmodernists… go so far as to say that all thought is equally relevant (that there are no boundaries, no rules, no hierarchies, no objective reality and all facts are just ‘social constructs’); furthermore, all species are of equal value, and a human being is no more important than an ant.”

4 This was known as ‘deconstructionism.’ Cancel culture is its progeny.

As we know language matters. This challenges our testimony if we speak christianese.

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Postmodernists are nominalists. Universal principles, God's laws, are mere names without any corresponding reality. When Paul declares “All have sinned” (Romans 3:23), postmodernists cringe in dissent.

**Sinfulness - “the Fall”**

The problem, says Andrew Park, a Methodist theologian, is that Christian theories, in emphasizing the sinner, failed to consider those who are victims of sin. He calls them “improper theologies” that “marginalize” others. Treating everyone as a sinner, promotes the impression that a victim’s suffering is their fault. Mr. Park maintains this is not what the Savior taught: that a victim’s suffering is the consequence of their own sins (John 9:3). Sin, for Park, is an offense against humanity, not against God. His theology devolves into an insightful piece of psychology, nonetheless, failing to address what to do about sin against God.

To postmodernism, there is a 2 fold problem with a talk of “sin” (1) this does not take into consideration genetic differences, the nature of hormonal responses, addictions, and other diseases and (2) talk of sin and grace makes victims of us. The very idea that we cannot “save” ourselves stifles our freedom. Post-modernists are libertarians. Rita Nakashima Brock, an American feminist scholar and theologian, fulminated, “It’s telling people you don’t have a right to protest when terrible things happen to you. It short-circuits the legitimate expression of tragedy and grief that is fundamental to our psychological health. We ought to be outraged that the Roman empire crucified Jesus, not grateful, not happy that he died for us, but outraged at this travesty of justice.”

Postmodernism was simply admitting an irrefutable and palpable despondency when relying on the church or academia. We must become self-reliant, they contend, if there is to be improvement. Societies that triumph over the evils that would destroy them, they conclude, are self-help societies.

The need for a Savior to eradicate sin discredits the importance of self-reliance, supports a self-mortification, promoting a sense of guilt (they say)

**Guilt vs Conviction**

Postmodernists maintain that God only shame them. God, they say, never lifts anyone above these ‘deficiencies’ the church calls “sin.” The Feminist Rosemary Radford Ruether maintained that the power to elicit guilt from them puts them in His [the preacher? God's?] debt. And we will talk about “debt.” (John 16:8).

Humility is the fear of the LORD; its wages are riches and honor and life. (Proverbs 22:4). My paraphrase: The consequence of a respectful dependence on the Lord is a gloriously enriched life.

**Self-Discovery - Introspection**

Postmodernism is, therefore, the age of self-discovery, finding well-being and happiness in who I am as an individual and what expresses my humanity. There are no absolute or divine laws.

Solomon scoffed, “A party gives laughter, wine gives happiness, and money gives everything!”

3
“After much thought,” he regretted, “I decided to cheer myself with wine. And while still seeking wisdom, I clutched at foolishness. In this way, I tried to experience the only happiness most people find during their brief life in this world.” *(Ecclesiastes 3:2 NLT).*

**Worldviews and Touchstones**

Every worldview, also, has what philosopher William Halverson called a “touchstone proposition.”

For the Christian this is the belief in the involvement of an immanent God of Love whose purposefulness and plan makes life a process not an evolution, progressing toward the fulfillment of His promises to us.

A **scientific** touchstone proposition, however, needs to believe in the stability of the universe and the rules by which it is governed. It needs to reason that such knowledge is comprehensible using rational inquiry. “All things knowable” It needs to rely on the discovery of unchanging principles of natural law.

**Evolution** represents a touchstone proposition that sees all things in flux, becoming, adapting. An evolutionary worldview reasons that what is today was not here in the past and will be changed, gone, in the future., We are ever evolving into a better world—in the word’s of Teilhard de Chardin, “We are moving; we are going forward.”

*(Hebrews 11:6)* “But it is an impotent idea with which God could not possibly be pleased: to approach Him, the King of Kings, in our urgency for His mercy, thinking Him an unfair Potentate, when we know He treats all His faithful servants fairly, kindly and with great generosity.”

6 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ was a French philosopher and Jesuit priest who trained as a paleontologist and geologist and took part in the discovery of Peking Man
Tree Girdling

Reverend Grazier shared that story of his life to explain that even if we sin from time to time, the old nature, like the old tree, has been disconnected from any source of strength that would feed its ways. As we follow Christ and serve Him in relationship expect old habits, old ways, old thoughts, old feelings to drop off, that are not representative of God and His kingdom that is now very much a part of who we are becoming in Him (Romans 8:29).

Romans 6-8 tells the story of the believer's experience. 6: The tree is girdled; but 7: struggling with living by law (and not sinning); 8 how to live this new life in Christ. (the secret of walking in the Spirit).

1. We are another tree with good fruit, the new you, which Paul explained using the comparison of wearing clothing to depict our behavior: “Wearing the new man who is created by God in right living, faithful to God’s will” (Ephesians 4:24). The point of interest here is that this new life is a direct provision of Jesus' death and resurrection.

Five Things Jesus Did

1. Jesus died to deal finally and decisively with sin.
   a) I Peter 2:22-24. Peter, who witnessed Jesus’ trial and crucifixion wrote, “Jesus, who had never committed sin nor could anyone ever catch Him in a lie or being deceptive, while being verbally abused, mocked and falsely accused, never lashed out in kind. He suffered their threats in silence, unjustly delivered over to the authorities. He, Himself, carried our sins in His body upon the Cross in order that by removing our sins, we might live right in relationship with God.”
   b) Hebrews 9:28. Another writer of the Bible wrote, “Christ Jesus (and He did this only once ever) offered Himself in His death to God to provide for the removal of our sins. He will return for us, not to die again but, to rescue from this present world those of us who have been faithfully looking for Him.”

2. Jesus freed us from a bondage to sinning
   a) Matthew 20:28 & Mark 10:45 recorded: “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life to free many, who accept it, from slavery to their sins.”
   b) I Timothy 2:5-6 “For there is only one God, even one peacemaker between God and us, the man, Christ Jesus. Who gave Himself (to death) in our place at the time appointed by His Father to free us from slavery to our sinning.”
   c) Revelation 5:9 “And they sang a song never before sung: “You are declared worthy to take the scroll and break its seals, because ... with your blood you bought a people for yourself from every ancestral line and language and nation and race.”

3. Jesus took our place: (Our substitute)
   a) Isaiah 53:4-6 “Surely he endured the wounds of our sin and carried a heavy load of our pain (mental and physical), yet we concluded God struck Him down for His own sins because God was punishing him. But not so! He was being wounded because of our rebellion, he was crushed, shattered, in pain spiritually, emotionally, physically, from the waywardness for which we were liable; His discipline brought us peace with God,
and from the stripes, the whipping He bore, healing for our souls and bodies. Yes, we all, like sheep, all of us, strayed from the fold, each of us went our own way; and the Lord punished Him.”

b) Romans 5:18-19 “Indeed, therefore, as by one act of disobedience (Adam’s) the sentence of death was passed on all of us, likewise, through the obedience of one man, Jesus, all of us can live aright before God. Let me explain it this way: because of one man’s unwillingness to listen (regarding the forbidden fruit) many were declared liable (sinners), and likewise through one man’s obedience (in His sinlessness and innocence going to the Cross), many are declared in right standing with God.”

c) 2 Corinthians 5:14 “For the love of Christ has us in its grip; we concluded this, that He died for all, in their place.”

d) Romans 5:7-8 “You will seldom if ever hear of a just man taking the penalty for someone criminally liable. For a good person’s cause, perhaps, someone might consider risking their life. But God proved His love for us because while we were still sinners, Christ died in our place.”

e) I John 2:1-2 “My dear children, I write these things to you to discourage you from sinning; but, on the outside chance you might displease God, doing your own thing and ignoring His wise counsel, don’t lose heart. That’s why He sent Jesus who always knows what is right, who comes from the Father to do His bidding. Concerning our sins, He went to Calvary for this very reason, to deal with everyone’s sins.”

   a) Romans 8:1 “Therefore, there is now no one judged worthy of punishment for those in Christ Jesus.”
   b) Romans 5:9 “Therefore much more now rather being declared just by His death on the Cross, we will be spared His anger, which is coming.”

5. Jesus restores our relationship with God
   a) Romans 5:10-11 “If, to explain, while we were enemies of God, we were restored to friendship and relationship—this through the death of His Son—so much the more, we can conclude that now having been restored to friendship, our being rescued from being enslaved to sin, is assured through His resurrection from the dead.”
   b) 2 Corinthians 5:19 “God was in the person of Christ Jesus (He is God) restoring our relationship with Him, not keeping the record anymore of our sin (rebellion or waywardness).
   c) Colossians 1:20 “God, through Jesus, restores all things, both on earth and in heaven (as He made them before Adam and Eve disobeyed). Said another way: He made peace through the blood of His Cross (Jesus’ death on the Cross).”
What All Christians Believe

1. Jesus was born of a virgin —Mary—Luke 1:34 “I know not a man” [The reference to a ‘virgin’ in Isaiah 7:14 is really the word “young maiden.”] and therefore,

2. Jesus is God —God’s Son — [Jesus is actually God come in the flesh or as a human. John 3:16; Luke 1:23 “the Son of the Highest.” The Christian faith maintains that Mary carried Jesus to term before she was married to Joseph which made Jesus, God’s Son] and therefore,

3. Jesus is, therefore, a member of the Trinity—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit— [Ephesians 4:4-6 Paul spoke of “one Spirit..one Lord.. one God and Father of all.” Also see I Corinthians 12:4-6 “same Spirit..same Lord..same God.” Also: May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14 ] and therefore

4. When He died on Calvary, God died for our sins—He died on the Cross, that we might live forever with Him in heaven — [It is important to note that it was God, in the person of Christ, that died there. A mere human could not satisfy the punishment for the sin of the whole world] and therefore,

5. The Bible IS God’s Word. -The message of the Bible is all about the Cross and our Lord’s resurrection. Anyone who discredits the account saying it isn’t God’s Word discredits the need for the Savior, in the person of Jesus Christ, to be crucified for the sins of the world.

Dogmas

“Dogmas” includes discussing original sin, God’s satisfaction in Jesus’ death, the Simplicity of God. Dorothy Sayers, who was known for her crime novels but who is one smart Christian lady, in her book “Creed or Chaos,”[page 50] observed, “The question ‘What think ye of Christ?’ lands the average man at once in the very knottiest kind of dogmatic riddle.” But notwithstanding we maintain with Ms. Sayers [page 51], “If the ‘average man’ is going to be interested in Christ at all, it is the dogma that will provide the interest.”

The Incarnate God = John 3:18

The Chalcedon Creed: Jesus is “the same Son, … the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man….“As they said at Nicaea “same in being” or "same in essence" with God the Father.” I like the way Dorothy Sayers said it [page 11], “One thing is certain: if (Jesus) really was both God and man (and He was!), then when the man Jesus died, God died too, and when the God, Jesus, rose from the dead, man rose too because they were one and the same person.” The exciting news here is that, in order to provide eternal life for us, two things needed to be accomplished:

1. God had to die. Justice is satisfied and we, who believe, are now free to obey God” (Romans 8:3).

2. Man needed to rise again from the dead. “Now is Christ raised from the dead, having become the first of them who have died” (1 Corinthians 15:20).
   a. to show that resurrection from the dead was real. “We now have an earthly body made of dust, but we shall have a heavenly (an eternal) one” (1 Corinthians 15:49).
   b. to show that what Jesus’ death was suppose to accomplish, did, in fact, accomplish, that is, providing a new life in Christ for all who believe “He was delivered over to die for our sins and resurrected to show we were now free from the bondage to that sin.” (Romans 4:25).
Perspectives
How does the Cross, impact us? In what practical ways, might we testify of its provision? What did Jesus do for us, provide for us, on Calvary? Our quest is not theological but practical and relational. We'll discuss the three-fold provision of the Cross; the New Covenant in Jesus' death and resurrection; Divine assurances; the power of Christ's forgiveness; heavenly rewards and more about justification—to name a few.

God’s Suffering Servant
A study in Isa 53 and three s's: sin, sacrifice, and satisfaction

Christ, Our Passover
“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.” (1 Corinthians 5:7) and both John and Peter, two more Apostles, agreed (John 1:36; 1 Peter 1:19). We will discuss Communion and the Eucharist and the love feasts celebrated by the early Christians as well as the Passover observance itself in relation to Christ's death.

Christ, Our Representative
How should we see Calvary? 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

The Righteousness of God
Romans 3:25-26 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,[fn]through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished—he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

Christ, Our Redeemer
The story behind Hosea’s marriage to his wife, Gomer, is actually God’s story with Israel. A study of Hosea's prophecy.

Christ, Our Brother
A study of Adoption and community

The Power of Christ’s Forgiveness
The parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matthew 18:21-35).

Christ, Our Message
The Gospel transcend culture. A summary study of motifs and grace as God's gift of Himself.
François Turrettin

François Turrettini (17 October 1623 – 28 September 1687; also known as Francis Turretin) was a Genevan-Italian Reformed scholastic theologian who looked at divine justice from the underside of the tapestry: five reasons for maintaining why we can say that Jesus' substitutionary or sacrificial death in our stead was not unjust.

In Turretin’s words: There was no injustice made:
1. Not to Christ, for he voluntarily took the punishment upon himself, and had the right to decide concerning his own life and death, and also power to raise himself from the dead.
   ○ Because Jesus was incarnate, sin was punished in the same nature in which it was guilty.
     “Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, Jesus also shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death — that is, the devil.” (Hebrews 2:14)
2. Not to God the judge, for he willed and commanded it.
   ○ Jesus voluntarily took the burden on himself. "I have come to do your will." (Hebrews 10:9)
3. Not to his natural justice, for the Surety (substitution) satisfied this by suffering the punishment which demanded it.
   ○ Jesus had power over his own life, so that he may rightfully determine respecting it. "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have the right to lay it down, and I have the right to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father." (John 10:18)
4. Not to the universe, by depriving an innocent person of life, for Christ, freed from death, lives forevermore.
   ○ If Jesus could be held by death, then he could free no one from its dominion, but He rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:17). “Jesus Christ … was appointed to be the powerful Son of God according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead.” (Romans 1:3-4)
5. Not by the life of the surviving sinner injuring the kingdom of God, for he is converted and made holy by Christ.
   ○ Jesus did not die for His own sins because He was sinless. Being polluted by no sin, he might not have to offer sacrifice for himself, but for us only. “For this is the kind of high priest we need: holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.” (Hebrews 7:26)
6. Not to the divine law, for its honor has been maintained by the perfect fulfillment of all its demands, through the righteousness of the Mediator; and by our legal and mystical union, he becomes one with us, and we with him.
   ○ He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (Luke 44:24)

Isaiah 53:11

“God looked upon Jesus, His agony of soul, and was satisfied. By His knowledge, God’s righteous servant will make many righteous. He bore their punishment.” (Isaiah 53:11).

Jesus’ death was a satisfaction befitting to God. Jesus’ death was an answer to something in God’s judgment/character, who He is, how He rules in the Kingdom of Heaven, His sense of
Justice. “God looked upon Jesus, His agony of soul and was satisfied.”

- Jesus’ death was an example of the extreme love of God for His creation. “By His knowledge” means “knowingly, fully aware of what He was willingly experiencing.
- Jesus’ death was a sacrifice to ransom and redeem mankind [free them and us] from the bondage to sin. “God’s righteous servant, will make many righteous.”
- Jesus' death brought total forgiveness “He bore their punishment.”

**Original Sin**

What happened when Adam sinned? St. Augustine coined the phrase “original sin,” not Adam’s sin alone but a sinfulness that all of us since him were born into. What I think happened was that God knew that just instructing someone to obey wouldn’t work; we needed new hearts (Ezekiel 36:26), transformed minds (Romans 12:2), and a new nature (2 Corinthians 5:17). So, God decided to call all of us sinners because He wanted to be merciful to all of us and send Jesus to die for all of us. (Galatians 3:22). As far as being called sinners, we lived up to the label (Romans 3:23).

Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury (1033/4–1109), a Benedictine monk, abbot, philosopher and theologian of the Catholic Church, believed in “original sin,” He taught that there is a difference here between the proclivity [the tendency] to sin and actually sinning. We can thank Adam for the first but not the second. We have free will.

Peter Abelard didn't believe in “original” sin only what we willfully commit. He maintained that we took the blame for Adam's sin. Sin was not yet a moral debt but simply a disorientation of desire which needed to be mended, by Jesus’ death. Abelard was a nominalist [nominalist] He wouldn't explain:” “for all have sinned” Romans 3:23)

**What We Do Know**

Paul shared seven details that we might reasonably believe are needed to explain what really happened on the Cross. These are like clues to “the mystery of godliness” (1 Timothy 3:16).

1. Jesus was God incarnate. “Though He was deity … he became a human … so that He might die — on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8).
2. Jesus volunteered freely to go to Calvary. Jesus told us, “No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down on my own. I lay it down by myself, and I am authorized to take it up again” (John 10:18).
3. Jesus was sinless. “…being human, He was tempted in every way, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).
5. Jesus died for sin in our place “God shows his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). We could not become friends with God unless and until Jesus went to the Cross.
6. Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22). God’s forgiveness became real to us after Jesus died on the Cross.
7. The Provisions of Calvary are available only through repentance. “…God now commands all people everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). In Ancient times God overlooked all the bad things people did but since Jesus died for our sins, He, now, wants us to repent.
A Retributive Justice

Turretin remarked, “God neither has willed, nor could have willed to forgive sins, without a satisfaction made to his justice”

A Restorative Justice

“I am alive,” Paul exclaimed, “but it is not the old me; my life now is all about Christ. I am still human, but what Jesus’ provided me through His death and resurrection, now, motivates and inspires me; it has given me purpose and direction, meaning and happiness. His faithfulness to me is life to me now! His love is, oh so, real to me! His crucifixion to me is everything!” (Galatians 2:20).

So, in a sense, we can agree with Augustine who referred to Jesus as both Victor and Victim. Christ’s death was both restorative and retributive. As the Victor, He dealt decisively with sin and restored us to friendship with God. As the Victim, He endured our punishment and proclaimed God’s forgiveness.

A Coherent and Plausible Way

So for logic’s sake and to explain our Savior’s crucifixion in the most reasonable way, many religious minds have thought up various ideas, some of which are clearly not biblical. They argue that Jesus’ death was

- a ransom paid to Satan,
- an outstanding debt paid to God,
- a way of appeasing God’s wrath
- an expression of love
- the risk of encountering evil men
- Augustine reasoned—a thought shared by many early Church Fathers—that Christ’s incarnation and death were not necessary for man’s redemption.”
- Gregory of Nyssa, who wrote a couple decades later, questioned, “… why does he [God] not affect his purpose by the mere exercise of His will, instead of working out our salvation in such a roundabout way, by being born and nurtured as a man, and even, while he was saving man, tasting death; when it was possible for Him to have saved man without subjecting Himself to such conditions?”
- Basil the Great, another early Church Father, thought Jesus had to be God come in human body to be an unrefusable ransom offered the devil to purchase the release of his human captives.”

The short answer, obviously, is that it wasn’t possible for this cup of suffering to pass from Him (Mark 14:36).

The challenge we have is to explain the Savior’s death in what Dr. William Craig called, “a coherent and plausible way.”
Various Explanations

Sharon Baker in “Executing God” suggests changing the metaphor. We have sought to explain Calvary in terms of the animal sacrifices in Ancient Israel. We have used the metaphor of

• the marketplace and ransoming someone out of slavery.
• We have used legal language to explain Calvary in terms of, what we imagine to be, God’s judicial system.
• We have even saw Calvary in economic terms of a debt that needed to be paid and forgiven.
• Occam’s nominalism as Abelard did that we cannot be held responsible for Adam’s sin or
• The search for a non-violent justification based solely on God’s wondrous love melting our cold, cold hearts as postmoderns want to believe or
• A justification that satisfies without punishing as Greek influences suggested or
• The logic of the courts that seemed to explain justice best, in legalese, which the reformers of the 16th century promoted or
• The language of finance because Satan deserved justice, too, as Gregory of Nyssa in the 4th Century surmised or
• The payment of a debt because it explains things in simplest terms, as Anselm of Canterbury argued.

Change the Story

Ms. Baker makes is that metaphors are culturally understood and this might mean changing the way we represent or describe some truth, in a story form that better explains that truth to our understanding.

My thoughts went to Don Richardson’s “Peace Child.”

Father Vincent J. Donovan in Christianity Rediscovered in Tanzania to the Masai. “Suddenly I feel the urgent need to cast aside all theories... and simply go to these people ...and talk to them the Christian message. I feel rather naked....”

We will be forever learning of, what Paul called, “the riches of His grace” (Ephesians 2:7).

Bill's C's & The Prodigal

Luke 15:11-32

Confession :17 “he came to his senses … I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: ”
Contrition :18 “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.”
Conversion ::20 “So he got up and went to his father”
Celebration :24 “For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.”
Theories of Atonement

The Governmental Theory of Atonement

Hugo Grotius, a Dutch jurist of the 17th century and the Enlightenment, believed simply that God as a Supreme Being has the right to do whatever He wants, and He wanted to send His Son to die for our sins. “There is, therefore, no injustice in this,” argues Grotius, “that God, who has the highest power with regard to all things not in themselves unjust and who is himself not subject to any law, wanted to use the sufferings and death of Christ in order to set a serious example against the immense guilt of us all, with who Christ was very closely connected by his nature, reign and suretyship [the relationship between the surety [guarantee], the principal debtor, and the creditor.]” (Defense 4.23)

A contractual arrangement to guarantee and end to sin in us (Hebrews 12:24 “Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,”)

1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,”

Hebrews 10 1-10 The old plan was only a hint of the good things in the new plan. Since that old “law plan” wasn’t complete in itself, it couldn’t complete those who followed it. No matter how many sacrifices were offered year after year, they never added up to a complete solution. If they had, the worshipers would have gone blissfully on their way, no longer dragged down by their sins. But instead of removing awareness of sin, when those animal sacrifices were repeated over and over they actually heightened awareness and guilt. The plain fact is that bull and goat blood can’t get rid of sin. That is what is meant by this prophecy, put in the mouth of Christ:

You don’t want sacrifices and offerings year after year;
you’ve prepared a body for me for a sacrifice.
It’s not fragrance and smoke from the altar
that whet your appetite.
So I said, “I’m here to do it your way, O God,
the way it’s described in your Book.”

When he said, “You don’t want sacrifices and offerings,” he was referring to practices according to the old plan. When he added, “I’m here to do it your way,” he set aside the first in order to enact the new plan—God’s way—by which we are made fit for God by the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus.

Psalm 40:8 I desire to do your will, [my pleasure is in pleasing you] my God; your law is within my heart (intestines). In Classical Greek there was a difference once between council and will, i.e what one decides as the right thing to do and what one wants to do. But this distinction is less obvious in the Psalms.

Jesus Ransomed Us From Satan (Cristus-Victor Theory)

See insert on Oresties: A ransom theory, would be at home in such a culture.

Roman law joined in. The ancient world they governed did not follow any principle like Jewish Halacha (Torah) law which would be propitiatory or seek justice by someone always being punished for breaking law. Such was thought too violent and not promoting a peaceful as well as just solution.
But to ransom mankind God had to pull off an ingenious deception. Wrestling His creation by force from the grip of a devil who stole it in the Garden incident was not thought theologically in keeping with His divine character: “With violence being excluded as an option,” Dr. Vidu tells us, “some bargain had to be struck with the devil.”

**Gregory of Nyssa:** Continuing this line of reasoning: “The divine deception motif received its most explicit defense from Gregory of Nyssa. (c. 335 – c. 395) Briefly summarized, the theory holds that Satan is tricked by God into accepting the body of Christ in return for the souls of human beings, which he held under his control. Satan accepts the ransom and kills Christ, oblivious to the fact that he had no right to kill a sinless person. Having thus committed the ultimate sin, and having overextended his authority, he is rightfully deprived of it.” For Gregory of Nyssa God would not be just to disregard Satan’s right over man. Adam freely gave himself to the tempter and sold himself into sin. “Satan’s right over man must be respected.”

**Augustine:** This theory survived with little serious criticism until its disassembly by Anselm in the eleventh century. Until then variations on this common theme were proposed. Augustine (354 – 430) reasoned that Satan’s power was delegated by God. (As in Job’s case?) Augustine advanced this reasoning, “If …the commission of sins and through the just anger of God subjected man to the devil, doubtless the remission of sins through the merciful reconciliation of God rescues man from the devil.”

**Athanasius, Irenaeus:** Then there was also the view of the devil as a usurper. On the whole, however, the devil was regarded as having some rightful dominion over us. Athanasius (c. 298 - 373 ) subscribed to this position, and so did Irenaeus (Bishop of Lyons, d. 202).

**Origen:** (c. 184 – c. 253) took the metaphor of ransom literally. He reasoned that “a transaction with Satan took place, in which Satan, unaware of Christ’s divinity, asked for the blood of Christ and therefore was deceived into committing the ultimate suicidal act.” Origen thought that Christ’s human soul was a ransom payment made to Satan in order to gain our release. “But to whom did he give his soul a ransom for many?” he asked. “Certainly not to God.” He thought, “What is it perhaps, then, to the evil one? For he had the power over us until the soul of Jesus was given to him as our ransom.”

**Gregory Nazianus** would sharply denounce the notion that Christ’s death was a ransom paid either to Satan or to God. Gregory believed that Jesus was not a ransom but a victim of Satan’s unjust attack. Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice to God “so as to snatch us from him who had us in his power…”

**Tertullian** (c. 155 – c. AD 220), "the father of Latin Christianity, was the first to use the legal terms merit and satisfaction of the Christian’s relation to God. They interpreted … Galatians 3:13 (Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us).

**Jesus Paid our Debt (Divine Command Theory)**

During the Middle Ages: Anselm of Canterbury (1033/4–1109) reasoned “Sin, as a failure to render to God what is his own, incurs a debt. This debt has to be repaid to God, without there being any possibility of gratuitous forgiveness of this debt. Since this particular debt cannot be paid, there are two options left for the sinner: punishment or satisfaction.

In civil or tort law a debt is satisfied by payment and fines. In criminal law, the crime is “punished.”
God was thought to view a recompense for His offended justice to be some form of compensation either through punishing the offender or requiring payment. These ideas are based on human relations in a legal dispute or the commitment of a crime. But is this what God was doing?

Anselm argued, “If anybody imagines that God can simply forgive us in the same way we are to forgive others, he has not yet considered the seriousness of sin.”

The concept of debt, scholarship reasons, is based on God’s own nature. Dr. Craig argued, “The character or nature of God himself necessitate that he punish sin.”

Henry Wace, Dean of Canterbury from 1903 to 1924 argued, “A law which can be broken without an adequate penalty, is no law at all; and it is inconceivable that God’s moral law can be violated without entailing consequences of the most terrible kind. … And can it reasonably be supposed that the most flagrant and willful violation of the highest of all laws—those of truth and righteousness—should entail no such results?”

Anselm wrote, “Our situation is compounded by the fact that in order to compensate God we need to give back more than we owed originally and by the gravity of our offense, having dishonored God, so that the debt we have incurred is of infinite proportion. It follows that our salvation requires God become man.”

“So no one but God could pay a debt of such magnitude, but no one but man is obliged to pay it.” - Anselm

Anselm explained why Jesus had to be divine and human, “Our situation is compounded by the fact that in order to compensate God we need to give back more than we owed originally and by the gravity of our offense, having dishonored God, so that the debt we have incurred is of infinite proportion. So no one but God could pay a debt of such magnitude, but no one but man is obliged to pay it. It follows that our salvation requires God become man”

Punishment is inflicted on the debtor. Satisfaction addresses the debt.
The Scripture

Matthew 6:12 “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” “He erased the certificate of debt,…” (Colossians 2:14) but the language according to the

- YLT (Young’s Literal Translation) says: “having blotted out the handwriting in the ordinances that is against us”
- The NLT (New Living Translation) reads it “the record of the charges.” But the word for “indebtedness” is not found here.
- The CSB rather loosely interprets all this, “He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us.” He wiped clean the debt of sin we owed, being obligated to obey the law which we didn’t because we couldn’t … and God knew this all along.
- The New English Translation (NET) reads, “He has destroyed what was against us, a certificate of indebtedness expressed in decrees opposed to us.”
- The New King James Version (NKJV) says “having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us.” (To be continued)

Six out of 16 popular translations interpreted this to mean “debt” or “indebtedness.”

Certificate of Debt

What was this certificate of debt Paul spoke of?

- Was this the Mosaic ceremonial ordinances that condemned us without providing an adequate redemption?
- Was it the punishment owed us for breaking the Mosaic moral code, including the ten commandments?
- Was it a debt of sin we owed God because of our rebellion against Him?

“Blotted out the handwriting” F. F. Bruce translated this “a signed confession of indebtedness.” He noted two words in this phrase “erased” and “certificate.” The word “erased,” among its uses, could mean, in today’s parlance, “canceled, to erase the accounts payable owed.” The word “certificate” means “a hand-written” note which may mean “a certificate of debt,” an I.O.U. or a “signed confession of indebtedness.”

“God frees us from our bankruptcy, only by paying our debts on Christ’s cross.” - John Stott

The three words of interest here are “handwritten the dogmas” which might read “handwritten in the dogmas.” All this might have been simpler to understand if the “in” had been written in, “He expunged what was hand-written in dogmas (requirements of the Mosaic law) against us….” …but the word “in” is missing.

But early Greek commentators supplied the meaning “by” (after a grammatical rule) understanding this to say, “the law, which was against us, was erased, removed, by the Gospel.” (Acts 16:4)
Consider Paul’s explanation to the Ephesians concerning dogmas or regulations which had to speak of the Mosaic law, “He made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that he might create in himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace.” (Ephesians 2:15) Luther might have appreciated this translation since it abrogated the Old Testament Law instead of elevating it to a place of honored fulfillment in Christ (Matthew 5:17).

**Jesus Appeased God’s Wrath (Substitutionary-Satisfaction Theory)**

Why must God be appeased? [Exodus 32:30] As Gregory of Nyssa once noted “Wrath is a term borrowed from the language of human feeling.” Was God’s wrath more an anger against sin than a rage against the sinner?

God’s severity …is ..shown, for He would not remit sin without penalty.” - Thomas Aquinas

**The Sacrament of Penance**

- It was during the Middle Ages that Penance came to be recognized as a Sacrament. By the 12th Century (Peter Lombard 1100 - 1160) became listed as one of the seven.

- *Contrition, confession, satisfaction, and absolution* by the priest delivers one from eternal punishment as well as the guilt.

- But the person still remains bound to make satisfaction for the temporal punishment that remains after the sin has been forgiven.

- After the Council of Florence met in 1439 satisfaction for temporal sins was decided in the judgment of the priest confessor and was mainly achieved by prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

- The main change is *forgiveness pronounced as absolution* by the priest rather than by acts of penance by the penitent.

- The Council of Trent in November, 1551 in response reaffirmed in
  - the 6th canon that “sacramental confession was instituted by divine law as necessary for salvation.”
  - In the 9th canon they also confirmed “the sacramental absolution b’y a priest is a true juridical act.”
  - In the 14th and 15th canons the Council stated that “atonning for sin through Christ Jesus is from God” and “priests through the power of the keys (Mt 16:19) can impose penances.”
  - The Council established the teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas in the matter of the Sacrament as dogma, including
    - indulgences as beneficial “for the remission of the punishment which remains after contrition, absolution, and confession.”
    - The Council of Trent remains authoritative Catholic doctrine on the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
NOTE

“The general atmosphere of Calvin's writings is also strikingly different: the key terms in Anselm (and later scholastic theologians) were those belonging to Roman civil law and to medieval feudal law—debt, liability, compensation, satisfaction, honor, price, payment, merit; …but in Calvin we find constant reference to punishment, death, the curse, wrath, substitution, surety, imputation—in other words to criminal law reinterpreted in the light of Biblical teaching on the law, sin, and death.”

Punishment

There are two words in the Greek for punishment in the New Testament. One, means to defend the honor of the punisher who receives satisfaction in afflicting an offender. The other word means correction. Clement of Alexandria referred the first to retribution for evil inflicted. The second to discipline.

Isaiah prophesied “the chastisement of our peace was upon him…” (Isaiah 53:5) where chastisement is more corrective and not tortuous punishment. The Hebrew means chastisement, discipline, admonishment, correction, instruction. It can be painful. Yes. But the Hebrew term is primarily associated with the proverbs of Solomon where he addresses parental instruction and the need of children to be taught divine wisdom.

Hebrews 12:6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.

Clement of Alexandria explained it this way: For there are partial corrections, which are called chastisements, which many of us who have been in transgression incur, by falling away from the Lord's people. But as children are chastised by their teacher, or their father, so are we by Providence. But God does not punish, for punishment is retaliation for evil. He chastises, however, for good to those who are chastised, collectively and individually.

Basil of Caesarea, Roman Bishop in Cappadocia (330 A. D. - 379 A.D.), argued, “For God is just, and the one who is just could not justify the unjust; for that reason he wanted them to be the mediation of a propitiator so that those who were not able to be justified through their own works might be justified through faith in him.” “Nevertheless,” John Stott cautioned, “we need to be alert to the dangers of law language into the inadequacy of liking God’s moral law either to the civil laws of the country or to the physical laws of the universe.”

Perhaps the greatest sin in the world today is that men have begun to lose the sense of sin. - Fastiggi

Exodus 31:14-18 Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. 15 For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. 16 The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. 17 It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.” 18 When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.
Jesus Displayed Unwavering Love (Moral Influence Theory)

- Peter Abelard: The parable of the prodigal son has led some to maintain that God forgives without punishment. Peter Abelard, taught, “Such a demonstration of love has the power to evoke in us a similar love.” The ground upon which God forgives sins was, according to Abelard, not a matter of penal justice or a propitiation for sin but our love aroused in us when we, to use John Stott’s words, “contemplate the death of Christ.”

- St. Augustine: Augustine’s theory on Christ’s death boiled down to a demonstration of how greatly God loved us. “God’s love is proved in that Christ should, without any evil desert of his own, bear our evils“

- Jesus’ own words may have suggested this to some theologians, “No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

- Dr. Vidu informs, “The thought that God could not gratuitously forgive becomes a major assumption of atonement theories only after Anselm (emphasis added)… in the eleventh century. … This interpretation tends to focus all attention on a contrast between ancient pagan retribution… and Christian … forgiveness, with the implication that Christianity rejects an account of retributive justice in favor of … forgiveness, and peace.”

- The power of forgiveness: Translated in the Septuagint Psalm 34:22 (LXX 33:23) “to go wrong” “The LORD redeems the life of his servants, and all who take refuge in him will not be punished. … οὐ μὴ πλημμέλησωσιν πάντες οἱ ἐλπίζοντες ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν - “those who hope in Him shall not go wrong” [living in harmony with God’s creation rather than keeping laws. Punishment as a legal measure is frowned on. Here is a word in our Bible for “sin” which means to be out of harmony with the rest of creation. It is found 62 times in the Old Testament but not in the New Testament.]

- Divine Gentleness and Love: A gentle Savior not a vindictive Savior: Luke 10:34 “He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine.” But did His gentleness lead to Salvation? 2 Corinthians 10:1 “By the humility (meekness) and gentleness (sweet reasonableness) of Christ, I appeal to you”

- Dr. Sharon Baker speaks of a substitutionary atonement but not a penal one—not as a payment of debt or punishment for sin. Baker is Assistant Professor of Theology and Religion at Messiah College in Grantham, Pennsylvania. “Vicarious suffering is ..suffering with rather than suffering instead of;” she explains. She sees Jesus’ humanity and His suffering as God coming down to our level while we are being raised to His. “The true sacrifice of Jesus lies not in the literal shedding of blood but the inward condition of his heart of love revealed by the outward giving of his life (and only) symbolized by his blood.”

- William Craig sees value in this theory but only if it is included with penal substitution. God’s self-substitution displays the depth of His desire to reconcile, which becomes a conviction or draw in others to want also to be reconciled. “The moral influence of Christ’s sacrificial death upon mankind,” Dr. Craig maintains, “has truly been inestimable.” When Jesus’ death blotted out our sins:
  - It removed the sense of guilt which Dr. Craig sees as an incentive to accepting Christ.
  - Secondly, Christ’s punishment becomes a demonstration of divine justice that triggers in some—or should, especially those who are victims, themselves, of injustices—a sense of identity. God’s seriousness,
  - Thirdly, in dealing with sin vicariously becomes a display of mercy that awakens in others a love for Him.
Postmodern Moral Theories

Postmodern thought proposes a moral theory based on a repulsion to violence. God does not need to punish Jesus in this theory. Retribution is a human invention based on an understanding of justice which is—by postmodern thinking—a tool of those in power more than “fairness” in protecting society.

S. Mark Heim, Samuel Abbot Professor of Christian Theology at Yale Divinity School, postulates Christ’s sacrificial death as problematic for postmodernists. He picks up on Rene Girard’s explanation of using a socially acceptable scapegoat to bring an end to—what is called—reciprocated violence. Also known as a mimetic solution to violence, Christ became God’s scapegoat, through Calvary, wherein God mimicked the evil He wished to end, to satisfy a social need for ultimate justice and to reestablish social order under His suzerainty.

Christ, a Scapegoat

Heim imagines, “He (God) disguises the murder (of a Savior) so that [it] will appear as a salvific, Messianic event.” Heim concluded, “Jesus didn’t volunteer to get into God’s justice machine. God volunteered to get into ours. God used our own sin to save us.” Heim’s theory, “God used our own sin to save us.” Has a biblical ring to it. It is Luther’s “wondrous exchange.”

James Allison conjectures, “This surprising non-reciprocation (forgiveness) is what pulls the other person experiencing it out of the reciprocating mode of being (no interest in getting even) and enables that person to begin to receive and then transmit love as something simply given.” (restorative justice) Violence is a non-starter in a postmodern world, justice is better served through scapegoating-self-sacrifice

Liminality

The thought is this: God’s kingdom is not ordered by “law” but a justice based on His own liminality, His own incarnation, becoming the God-man. In His kingdom, humanity is redefined in terms of Christ’s image. A primary characteristic of this image is: acceptance of “the Other.” Lee called this, “an intimate communion between two or more human beings who completely respect and accept each other in all their otherness.” “Then the master told the servant, ‘Go out into the highways and hedges and make them come in, so that my house may be filled.” (Luke 14:23)

As God incarnate, Jesus is also called a hybrid, i.e. both God and man. It is His hybridity that postmodernism imagines God used to mimic evil. It is in keeping with this line of reasoning, God is called a trickster. He tricked us into thinking He was offering His Son, when it was really Himself in human disguise. Lee claims, “As the Father’s love moves him to give himself (while also remaining himself) to the Son, the Father moves into a liminal place by letting go of his divinity and his divine status (while also retaining them).”

Phil 2:5-8 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!
The Dogma

Divine Justice

Romans 3:25 where Paul concludes that God did what He did “so as to be just.” (NIV) Such words describe the justice of God.

“…all his ways are just.” (Deuteronomy 32:4) The legal language sown throughout the Scripture might also be tied to the Hebrew idea of Divine love. Scholarship adds, “In human relationships … obligation may yield (to) favor. God’s (mercy) … rests on the covenant by which He has freely bound Himself to the people.” In other words: He obligated Himself in a love relationship with His creation to go to the Cross on our behalf. But “on our behalf” makes no sense unless it was also “in our stead.”

The language that describes Calvary is in many places judicial because it was covenantal.

“In keeping with your faithful love, remember me because of your goodness, LORD. … for the sake of your name, forgive my iniquity…” (Psalm 25:7, 11)

The Paschal Mystery, the provision of a divine grace, might be explained as a divine justice that is reasonable to the heart of God. As Paul explained, “…from many trespasses came the gift, resulting in acquittal” (Romans 5:16)

A Penal Substitution

“Augustine’s explanation of the necessity of the Death of Christ in relation to the requirements of divine justice,” Adonis Vidu maintains, “is not sufficiently clear.”

God’s reason for retribution must be His alone and never any arrangement with the devil (Matthew 4:9-10).

We first agree with John? “Christ’s death … represents a fitting sacrifice, which propitiates God.” (1 John 4:10)

Richard Trench interprets this to say that Christ’s offering of Himself “enabled (God) to show Himself propitious (favorable) to us once more.”

...no other family of theories takes God to be the object of the work of Christ on the cross. - Vidu

Romans 5:10 For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Let’s pause here in order to allow the next thought to sink in.
Of all the theories out there as to why the Savior had to go to a cross, the idea that He went to pay a penalty for sin is the only one that makes Calvary about God and not just us.

**Satisfaction**

“Christ’s death is penal in the sense that all death is penal,” Dr. Vidu informs us, “not in the sense that the Son is therefore punished by the Father.”

There are no traces of that idea (The Father punishing Jesus) in Augustine. The question here is not one of retribution but satisfaction. In what sense was God “pleased” or “satisfied” with Jesus’ suffering.

Isaiah 53:11 [NLT] “When he sees all that is accomplished by his anguish, he will be satisfied. And because of his experience, my righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for he will bear all their sins.”

Augustine, according to Adonis Vidu, argued that “Jesus demonstrates perfect obedience and, to use Irenaean language, recapitulates what humanity was originally meant to be. In this he satisfies God. … It is precisely His attitude to His death that satisfies and propitiates God.”

**Divine Simplicity**

The doctrine of simplicity, is a way of saying that

1. God is unlike any other being; “The Lord is great and is highly praised; his greatness is unsearchable.” (Psalm 145:3) and that

2. God is perfect, that is, God’s actions do not share in the limitations of human actions. God’s intentions, what He purposed to do, He does. There is no “space” between what He intends to do and what He accomplishes. It is only in “time” we see these two ideas as distinct. (God’s predestination and His omniscience continues to raise theological discussions among the scholars.) But His Word declares: “so my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do.” (Isaiah 55:11)

Irenaeus calls God an “uncompounded Being, without diverse members, and altogether like, and equal to himself, since he is wholly understanding, ... spirit, ...thought, ...intelligence, ...reason, and wholly hearing, ...seeing and light and the whole source of all that is good.” In simplest language: “It is an utter impossibility for him to cease to be either loving or just.”

“The doctrine of divine simplicity is not intended as an apophatic sublation [to say what God is by saying what He is not] of all talk of divine nature.” … That is to say, we are not trying to minimize a conflict of interest between mercy and justice, or forgiveness and punishment, by arguing that justice is not justice, punishment is not really punishment. As Adonis Vidu points out, “It is precisely such capriciousness, on the one hand, or impotence, on the other, that the concept of simplicity expressly denies.”

22
Looking at God through a single lens (of divine love), interpreting all His actions in terms of His love for us, not only inspires our understanding of God’s Word but it explains everything about our relationship with Him as believers. “For I know the plans I have for you — this is the LORD’s declaration — plans for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

Can a loving God not forgive? (Or is His love conditional?) How does mercy and a penal justice come together in one divine heart? Is the sinner criminally responsible whether he is ignorant of his sinfulness or not. [The Catechism of the Catholic Church declares, “(Para 1857) "Mortal sin is sin … which is … committed with full knowledge and deliberate consent." Jesus extended forgiveness to His accusers from the Cross clarifying, “they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

“…the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin’s power so that the promise might be given on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ to those who believe.” (Galatians 3:22) God’s love was not going to let this matter go. He created us for His glory and that desire of His, His intention in this matter, remains unchanged and unchanging.

In general, a theory of atonement attempts to show how God could be merciful and at the same time exact a penalty for sin, how His justice could be both retributive and restorative. The doctrine of a divine simplicity for God attempts to show that,

When God is exercising one attribute of His nature, He is exercising all attributes of His nature.

“Then the LORD became jealous for his land and spared (had compassion on) his people” (Joel 2:18). Simplicity teaches that He does all things as an expression of His love.

The doctrine of simplicity, then, must be defined such that mercy and justice are two different names for God’s only moral attribute: his love. Mercy and justice are therefore synonymous. - Vidu

“He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the LORD’s unfailing love” (Ps. 33:5). Perceiving God in this way, simplifies explanations.

Psalm 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; faithful love and truth go before you.
The concept does not entail that all attributes are subordinated to divine love (1 John 4: 8), but that they are all the same. God’s love is the same as his justice. … For perfect-being theologians like Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas, the simplicity of the divine nature means that God, as actus purus [(absolute perfection], is just and benevolent at one and the same time.” -Vidu

All this can be said in one sentence:

**The history of atonement theories is really a debate about the nature of God, that is the nature of Divine love.**

**Chuck Smith**, Costa Mesa, CA. Calvary Chapel taught the the fruit of the Spirit “Love” [Galatians 5:22-23] was the sum of the other 8 fruit: Joy Peace, Joy, Faith, Longsuffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Meekness, & Temperance.

**The Sacrament of Penance**

Catholic doctrine says that Jesus' crucifixion removed original sin but not the sins we commit in our lives called “temporal sin.” The Sacrament of Penance in the Catholic faith is contrition for temporal sins committed by the penitent, absolution by a priest, and confession (repentance). Because sin necessitates punishment, in Catholic theology, even though it is forgiven, the sin must be purged. Dr. **Robert Fastiggi**, Bishop Kevin M. Britt Chair of Dogmatic Theology and Christology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, author of “The Sacrament of Reconciliation” wrote,

**Thomas Aquinas taught, ‘absolution delivers a person from eternal punishment as well as guilt.’ But the person still remains bound to make satisfaction for the temporal punishment that remains after the sin has been forgiven.**

Penance alone, therefore, does not address the temporal effects of sin. **Pope Paul VI** proclaimed, “It is a divinely revealed truth that sins bring punishment inflicted by God’s … justice. These must be expiated either on this earth, through the sorrows, miseries and calamities of this life and above all through death, or else in the life beyond through fire and torments or ‘purifying’ punishments.”
Thomas Aquinas maintained the benefit of indulgences, in this regard, for the remission of punishment which must be purged after contrition, absolution, and confession of those sins. The Christian life, therefore, should be understood as a summons to engage in “spiritual battle” against the threefold concupiscence: of sensualism, greed, and pride (1 John 2:16).

In the Church’s doctrine of purgatory, Pope Paul VI explained further, “In purgatory, in fact, the souls of those who died in the charity of God and truly repentant, but before satisfying with worthy fruits of penance for sins committed and for omissions, are cleansed after death with purgatorial punishments.” This is called “post-mortem purification.” Reconciliation includes, then, both forgiveness for sins and purification from the effects of sin. This puts the penitent on the mystical path of purgation, illumination, and union with God.

William H. King, ‘an ordained Permanent Deacon’ for the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City (and my brother), currently teaching at Bishop McGuinness Catholic High School in Oklahoma City, OK, offered this clarification: “In Roman Catholic parlance, the idea of penance and repentance are not the same: repentance does not constitute a reparation (penance) for the harm caused by temporal sin. Yes, repentance is the conversion the penitent experiences when seeking forgiveness. The Prodigal Son ‘coming to his senses’ e.g., a conversion moment…he went to his father to ‘confess’”

**Indulgences**

Indulgences .. are linked to the Catholic theology of salvation,” wrote Robert Fastiggi. “The Catechism of the Catholic Church,” he explains, “defines an indulgence as a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven….”

My Brother, Bill, ..although the sin is forgiven and forgotten, whatever damage the sin brought about in terms of our relationship with God or with the faith community, still must be repaired, ergo, “penance.” The typical penance involves one-on-one with God through prayer, or prayerfully reading the scriptures (Lectio Divina).

In Western Christianity (such as Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, or Anglicanism), **Lectio Divina** (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a traditional monastic practice of scriptural reading, meditation and prayer intended to promote communion with God and to increase the knowledge of God's word. In the view of one commentator, it does not treat scripture as texts to be studied, but as the living word.

When a faithful member of the community dies before having a chance to “reconcile” with God and his Church, then what? A period of “purgation” or purification begins to ready oneself for life eternal in the presence of God. The Catholic Church has long understood that good and faithful people die before having a chance to “make things right with the Lord,” and should not be condemned to eternal damnation, a situation only God can decide. “…all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Indulgences cleanse the soul from a recidivism to sin which further temptations, otherwise, often leads. Indulgences becomes a Catholic understanding of the process of sanctification. “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48)
Indulgence not only prepares the believer, the penitent, for Heaven but also supports living holy in this life. A scripture reference often sited is 2 Maccabees 12:42-46 which tells the story of a sacrifice made to atone for the sins of Jewish soldiers who died “wearing amulets of the gods of Jamnia.”

“Nothing unclean will ever enter (The New Jerusalem).” (Revelation 21:27) Because we leave this life with the work of purification incomplete, the Catholic doctrine of purgatory and post-mortem purification along with prayers from the living brings the people of God opportunity to be clean. (Holy and clean are the same New Testament word.)

Sin has consequences, as King David learned, who wrote 7 penitential Psalms [Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143]. 2 Samuel 12:13-14 tells the story of David’s adultery and the death of his son born to Bathsheba, conceived that fateful night of sin. The doctrine of Indulgence addresses the results of temporal sin (sins we commit in this life, not “original” sin).

We are told that indulgences built Saint Peter's Basilica, but be that as it may, in 1597, Pope Pius V abolished all indulgences that required fees or payments. Some examples of plenary indulgences, that is total cleansing from sin, Dr. Fastiggi tells us are:

- papal blessings issued 3 times a year on solemn feast days issued by a diocesan bishop;
- receiving Holy Communion for the first time;
- piously reciting the Tantum ergo [the last two stanzas from the Eucharistic Hymn (Pange Lingua) composed by St. Thomas Aquinas] after Mass on Maundy Thursday; adoration of the Cross on Good Friday or
- personally making the way (stations) of the Cross;
- listening to sacred preaching at a mission;
- devoted prayer in the Rosary in church
- ..among others.

Dr. Fastiggi summaries, “ultimately, indulgences and the Sacrament of Penance should be seen in light of God's mercy and His desire to free us from the ravages of sin. Indulgences, like penances, serve as medicines for the healing of the soul.”
Protestantism

In brief: A belief in a justification by faith alone by these Reformers made Anselm’s theory of a divine satisfaction for sin untenable.

1. The Reformers called Jesus’ crucifixion a punishment for sin: Anselm taught that God’s offended honor needed satisfaction while the reformers maintained it was His retributive justice that required a punishment for sin. How should we interpret God’s satisfaction in Isaiah 53:11?: “He … shall be satisfied.” (Isaiah 53:11)  Dr Craig added, “The Reformers also typically held that human salvation requires the satisfaction of divine justice, but this was achieved through substitutionary punishment, not (satisfaction).

2. The Reformers saw Jesus’ crucifixion as a necessary offering for our sins: Anselm saw Christ’s death as a sacrifice not, as the reformers believed, as a punishment or penal death. To Anselm the emphasis was on His life freely given (not required) for our salvation.

3. The Reformers saw Jesus’ death in fulfillment of covenantal law: For Anselm, Christ was the perfect sacrifice because He, being sinless, offered Himself voluntarily to God. To the reformers Christ’s death satisfied a legal requirement that “it was expedient that one man should die for the people.” (John 18:14)

4. The Reformers, in calling His death a punishment, understood it covered all sin, both original and temporal: For Anselm, Christ’s death satisfied God’s honor in connection with only original sin since only the liability for Adam’s disobedience was imputed to us and not his guilt. Our sins must be purged through indulgences.

An Introduction to Justification

The Reformers taught “faith alone.” Paul asserted, “…we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” (Romans 3:28)

But Catholicism might be more inclined to quote James who taught good works as an outward sign of a true conversion by faith: “a man is justified, and not by faith only.” (James 2:24)

The preparation for sanctifying grace, or the process of justification came out of a counter-reformation prompted by Lutheran teaching that justification came by faith only. This conflict may be reduced to two points.

1. Protestantism reduces the process of justification to merely a fiduciary faith; and maintains that this faith, exclusive even of good works, is all-sufficient for justification, laying great stress upon the scriptural statement sola fides justificat. (Justified by faith alone)

2. Protestantism makes of the forgiveness of sin merely a concealment of it, so to speak; and of the sanctification a forensic (legal by covenantal law) declaration of justification, or an external imputation of the justice of Christ. (Declared righteous not made righteous.)

The Council of Trent met between 1545 A.D. and 1563 A.D. to address these issues, original sin and justification among others, raised by Luther. The Council maintained in contention with the Protestants that justification takes place at baptism and includes both forgiveness and the cleansing from all original sin—and the cleansing of sins committed before baptism for those who come to Catholic Faith and are baptized as adults.

Believers, according to Catholic teaching, are not declared but made righteous. [simul justus et
peccator. “at one and the same a righteous person and a sinner”] Catholics believe that our free will is still a major factor in salvation. This is why justification is also known in Catholic teaching as sanctifying grace. It's a process not a declaration. Indulgence plays a role along with forgiveness but with Protestants, forgiveness accepted by faith stands alone as necessary for a true salvation.

In the process of justification we must distinguish two periods: first, the preparatory acts or dispositions (faith, fear, hope, etc.); then the last, decisive moment of the transformation of the sinner from the state of sin to that of justification or sanctifying grace, which may be called the active justification.” In Catholicism, justification is a process that transforms the believer by purging out the sin. Most Protestants teach justification and sanctification as two separate acts of God. Justification, to Evangelicals, for example, is a declaration of a righteousness God provides through a sanctification which is a life long process.

It seems appropriate here to quote John Stott, who admits a simplification of this clear difference in teaching on justification between Roman Catholics and a large part of Protestantism. We must not bury this timely note in pages of theological discourse but try to emphasize it here.

“Risking the danger of oversimplification, one may say that Evangelicals and Roman Catholics together teach that 1) God by his grace is the only Savior of sinners, that 2) self-salvation is impossible, and that 3) the death of Jesus Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice is the ultimate ground of justification. But precisely what justification is, how it relates to other aspects of salvation and how it takes place—these are areas of continuing … debate.” - John Stott

The Wondrous Exchange

For Luther, the road began in Bethlehem and led to Golgotha. Jesus' suffering, learning obedience, and being tempted—His humanity—was a necessary part of the struggle. “The key difference from penal substitution (for Luther) is that Christ underwent all of these things (temptations and suffering) not as something demanded by God as a requirement for our absolution (forgiveness) but as what is entailed (in, by) his assuming our condition (the incarnation) and wrestling with it.”

For Luther, reformed theories of atonement failed to grasp the extent and significance of Jesus' identification with our sins. Luther saw Jesus' entire life as a “wondrous exchange:” He became sin that we might be made the righteousness of God. Commenting on Galatians 3:13 Luther wrote that ]

Christ became “Peter, the liar; Paul, the persecutor, David, the adulterer; Adam, the disobedient; the thief on the cross…” He became sin. For Luther, this truth is to be taken literally. “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Corinthians 5:21)

For Luther, it was precisely this identification, captured by the concept of a great exchange, that silenced his fears. For Luther, the victory of Christ consisted precisely in this, that sin and death are defeated. Luther, writing to a monk in distress over his sins, admonished, “Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to sing to him and say ‘Lord Jesus, you are my righteousness, I am your sin. You took on you what was mine; yet set on me what was yours. You became what you were not, that I might become what I was not.’”

28
The key **difference** from penal substitution, for Luther, was that Christ underwent all of these things not as something demanded by God or required but as a voluntary—using his word—**exchange**, our sins for His righteousness. He is expunging His own law on the Cross, taking our punishment for breaking His law.

Luther and Calvin, however, were not in total harmony over the reason for our Lord’s crucifixion. To Calvin, Christ taking upon Himself the punishment for our sins was the cause of our redemption. The Savior’s suffering, as such, was not, however, for Luther, the fundamental point of atonement but rather His victorious resurrection over the sin imputed to Him on our behalf. For Luther, Jesus defeated death, and in the process, the devil, sin, and the Torah law. Calvin did not see the Torah law as an enemy of salvation to be defeated, but inspired truth about our need for a Savior that was fulfilled on Calvary.

**The T. U. L. I. P. Doctrine - Eternal Security**

The tulip is an acrostic that, perhaps, was ingeniously created to explain a penal substitution. We must credit some future student of John Calvin with this piece of ingenuity, also known as “eternal security.” Let me invite you to read “What is Reformed Theology?: Understanding the Basics,” by R. C. Sproul, where he addresses this matter of what the five points of Calvinism mean.

**“It Is Finished”**

When Jesus cried, "It is finished!" What was finished? What did He mean by these words just before He expired on the cross?

- **Paid in full:** "(Financial) receipts are often introduced by this phrase,” according to Moulton & Milligan's Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament. In general the word means: to fulfill obligations, to pay."
  - Charles Swindoll explained: "It was a Greek expression most everyone present would have understood. It was an accounting term. Archaeologists have found papyrus tax receipts with "Tetelesthai" written across them, meaning "paid in full." With Jesus' last breath on the cross, He declared the debt of sin cancelled, completely satisfied. Nothing else required. Not good deeds. Not generous donations. Not penance or confession or baptism or...or...or...nothing. The penalty for sin is death, and we were all born hopelessly in debt. He paid our debt in full by giving His life so that we might live forever.”
  - The simplest meaning of "finished" in the form He spoke it on the Cross is "All is fulfilled, All is accomplished!"

Jesus finished the Work FINALLY. “The fulness of the time was come.” (Galatians 4:4)

- Jesus finished the work COMPLETELY “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”(Luke 24:26-27)
- Jesus finished the work once FOR ALL TIME. “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”(Hebrews 10:10)
The Simplicity of God

St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, proposed that God is characterized by simplicity. There is no attribute or expression of His being that is not demonstrated in every act. We can say that God’s counsel is one and the same as His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13). He does not have nor would He ever need a “plan B.” A theology that proposes that God has anything less than His perfect will for us (Jeremiah 29:11) is an invention of our despondency over our failures—nothing more.

We see God’s simplicity in the Unity of the **Trinity**. (John 14:7, 26; 17:21) The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are One in every sense and yet they are three. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

On the Cross, **mercy and justice were united in Him**. In terms of the atonement His retributive justice is also a restorative justice. God’s wisdom is both a gentle voice (James 3:17) and loud (Proverbs 1:20). When He gave Egypt for Israel’s ransom, it was love (Isaiah 43:3-4). In this way His attributes distinguish Him from all other beings.

In a word, God is “**Holy**.” It was a Holy God that was crucified for us. Instead of thinking that God is sometimes kind and sometimes cruel, we need to step back far enough to see how God is always and only an agent of divine love. His wisdom has always been **unchanged and unchanging**: “pure, then peace-loving, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without pretense.” (James 3:17) “God is love” (1 John 4:8) does not so much reveal the essence of God, but rather, the nature of His love. We have a new word for this, for God’s actions—we call it …grace.

Let’s summarize: by the simplicity of God we mean: “…two kinds of consequences follow for his actions:

1. “First, all of his attributes are in the background of all of his actions; He is at the same time or in the same action both just and merciful.” “He is gracious, compassionate, and righteous.” *(Psalm 112:4)*
2. “Second, all of his actions will exhibit a unity and consistency worthy of perfect agency.” “God is not a man, that he might lie, or a son of man, that he might change his mind. Does he speak and not act, or promise and not fulfill?” *(Numbers 23:19)*

Grace is an expression of the generosity of His holiness and love irrespective of the achievements or trophies of any individual. Grace is the perfect and consistent demonstration of His infinite and eternal goodness toward us who by faith accept it.

- “Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” *(Psalm 23:6)*
- “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift” *(Ephesians 2:8)*
- “Now I truly understand that God doesn’t show favoritism” *(Acts 10:34)*
- “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.” *(Hebrews 13:8)*
- “I, the LORD, have not changed…” *(Malachi 3:6)*
As I studied the Old Testament, I was also bothered by the stories about God’s … killing Uzzah instantly for touching the ark of the covenant, and by other narratives that seemed to reveal a brutal side to the character of God. How could I ever come to love such a God? The one concept, the central idea I kept meeting in Scripture, was the idea that God is holy. The word was foreign to me. I wasn’t sure what it meant. … Today I am still absorbed with the question of the holiness of God. I am convinced that it is one of the most important ideas that a Christian can ever grapple with. It is basic to our whole understanding of God and of Christianity.” - R. C. Sproul

No one can fathom his greatness!
Psalm 145:3

When Jesus died on the cross the mercy of God did not become any greater. It could not become any greater, for it was already infinite. We get the odd notion that God is showing mercy because Jesus died. No--Jesus died because God is showing mercy. It was the mercy of God that gave us Calvary, not Calvary that gave us mercy. If God had not been merciful there would have been no incarnation, no babe in the manger, no man on a cross and no open tomb. - A. W. Tozier

...One only God, … incomprehensible … most holy. - The Westminster Confession of Faith

Has something … changed as a result of the atonement? (No! Not with God.). A change of treatment does not mean that God is now any less holy or any less just and more loving. Rather, an objective circumstance is now in place (we are now in Christ), which makes us experience God as more loving than just, even though strictly speaking nothing has changed in God. - Adonis Vidu
The Westminster Confession

In the Westminster Confession of Faith, God is described as the “one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and **perfection … without … parts… immutable … eternal, incomprehensible, almighty … most holy…most absolute…”

Because He is immutable (unchanging), eternal, and infinite, without parts, and perfect in all His attributes and actions, we can describe God using four aspects of His being:

1. **God is immutable**; He will not change. He cannot be other than Who He is. God cannot compromise, be compromised or deny the full expression of His holiness. He cannot be disingenuous or contradict Himself. He cannot be anything other than what He always is. Whoever God is, He cannot improve on His perfection, decide to reevaluate or redefine His attributes or to set His principles aside, by which He governs His actions and His dealings with mankind.
   - When He declared, “I will not vent the full fury of my anger; I will not turn back to destroy Ephraim. For I am God and not man, the Holy One among you; I will not come in rage” (Hosea 11:9) His decision was not based on the circumstance, nor was it based on an isolated or sudden warm feeling that prompted a change of mind and heart. He did what He did because of Who He is: “I am God…The Holy One.”
   - 15 times in 35 verses in Leviticus 19 we read the phrase “I am the Lord” after each instruction in a longer list of instructions. For God these were somehow typologically connected to the future Cross of Christ. God wasn’t pulling rank, instilling fear into the wilderness dwellers by requiring them to do something that gave Him a sense of power and authority over them. No! He was giving His holiness a metaphorical context that would much later translate into the plan of Salvation through His Son. To allow a compromise of His instructions to suffice would be to show Himself to Israel—to all of us—other than Who He is—something not possible for Him.
   - A familiar story is Moses striking a rock that he should have spoken to in providing drinking water for Israel. It troubled God to be so misrepresented. “But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you did not trust me to demonstrate my holiness in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this assembly into the land I have given them.” (Numbers 20:12)
   - The one thing His holiness, his person, his heart, his principles could not endure was idolatry. “Do not turn to idols or make cast images of gods for yourselves; I am the LORD your God.” (Leviticus 19:4)
   - We should agree with Dr. Vidu, again, “It is not that the crucifixion produced a change in God, from which point God was enabled to engage in another particular action. Rather, **crucifixion, resurrection, glorification, as well as God’s adoption of us …, all are elements of a single, … action, whose success depends in no measure on anything needing to happen on the human side** that would somehow escape his control.”

2. **God is infinite**; He cannot be or do or give less than Who He is - the size of His compassion. Divine self-expression must be always nothing less than infinite, infinitely wholehearted, infinitely real, infinitely impassioned.
   - The Augsburg Confession (1530) calls God an **immeasurable** power. Westminster
Confession of Faith calls Him “most absolute.” God does not because He cannot “pull His punches.” His love is infinitely intense. God’s wrath cannot be measured. His grace cannot be exhausted. He brings the riches of heaven with Him.

When Joash, the king of Israel, was instructed by Elisha to symbolize victory over Syria by shooting arrows in the ground, the prophet was deeply disturbed that the king only used three arrows. “The man of God was angry with him and said, “You should have struck the ground five or six times. Then you would have struck down Aram (Syria) until you had put an end to them, but now you will strike down Aram only three times.” (2 Kings 13:19)

Paul made our point for us: “Now to him who is able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us …” (Ephesians 3:20)

And in speaking of the grace of God, every believer should know that Jesus’ resurrection made possible ours: “so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.” (Ephesians 2:7)

“He did not even spare his own Son but offered him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything?” (Romans 8:32)

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments and untraceable his ways! (Romans 11:33)

3. **God is eternal**; He cannot be more than Who He is. He cannot grow or learn or develop or become better. Time is a measure of growth, decay, change, process—none of which impacts God or His actions. God lives and moves in eternity.

All God’s thoughts, actions, His purposes are eternal, not subject to time, have only and always eternity in view and eternal value.

“This is according to his eternal purpose accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Ephesians 3:11)

“I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 1:6)

Since God is eternal perfection, and His plans eternally perfect, He fulfills His promises; what God starts, He always finishes, Nothing God purposes becomes an incomplete task.

“So my word that comes from my mouth will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I please and will prosper in what I send it to do.” (Isaiah 55:11)

God’s Word always has the end result in view, the final consequence; a completed plan which is a single event, “single, all encompassing, utterly uncontradictable action”

4. **God is without parts**;

The Augsburg Confession (1530) calls God an **indivisible** power. (1530) All of his attributes are in the background of all of his actions; His role as Creator, Judge, and Savior is indivisible as is His being, the Trinity, in 3 persons. The Simplicity of God was proposed in support of the Doctrine of the Trinity. The Trinity maintained unequivocally that Christ is equally God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Adonis Vido pointed out how the doctrine of the trinity based on the simplicity of God made clear “the ontological distinction between God and humanity”

**God’s aseity**; The word is often used to refer to the Christian belief that God contains
within himself the cause of himself, is the first cause, or rather is simply uncaused. Notions of aseity as the highest principle go back at least to Plato and have been in wide circulation since Augustine, though the use of the word 'aseity' began only in the Middle Ages.

- It is the Creator who has saved us; “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- It was our Savior who created the universe and made us new creatures in Him; “All things were created through him (the Word), and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.” (John 1:3)
- It is the Judge of all the universe who exercises perfect justice in Christ on the Cross declaring us righteous by faith. “There is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me on that day,” (2 Timothy 4:8)

What God did God does. The record of God’s actions toward His creation are a display of His unchanging holiness. The underlining will and council of God are foundational to every act. He is no respecter of persons. God’s activity is perfection, that is, coherent, united and consistent.

- “The Lord GOD has sworn by his holiness:” (Amos 4:2)
- “The nations will know that I am the LORD — this is the declaration of the Lord GOD — when I demonstrate my holiness through you in their sight.” (Ezekiel 36:23)

The doctrine of simplicity says that God never displays certain attributes more than others. God simply is his attributes.

- The Westminster Catechism adds, “…working all things according to the counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarmer of them that diligently seek him; and withal most just and terrible in his judgments; hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.”
- “By these he has given us very great and precious promises, so that through them you may share in the divine nature, escaping the corruption that is in the world….” (2 Peter 1:4)

The Rule

Simplicity, then, yields the following rule: every aspect of a divine plan, every phase, every act and moment is eternally present when He begins.
## The Work Of Christ

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<th>Christ's Work</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<th>Christ is Made Unto Us (1 Co. 1:30)</th>
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<td>Cristys-Victor</td>
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All three of the major explanations of the death of Christ contain biblical truth and can to some extent be harmonized, especially if we observe that the chief difference between them is that in each God's work in Christ is directed toward a different person. - John Stott. p. 226

It is from him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom from God for us — our righteousness (justification), sanctification, and redemption. - I Corinthians 1:30
## A Summary

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Catholic-Orthodox-Traditional</th>
<th>Protestant-Reformed-Evangelical</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original sin was vicariously forgiven through Christ's death.</td>
<td>All sin is a breaking of the Covenantal Law of God both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Jesus freely went to the Cross,</td>
<td>1. Civil – Jesus paid our debt and satisfied Divine Law.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Volunteering Himself because He was sinless.</td>
<td>2. Criminal – Jesus was punished in our place - Substitutionary</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Faith is faithfulness.</td>
<td>3. Faith is fiduciary- a legal process.</td>
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<td>4. Justification by a faith that produces good works</td>
<td>4. Justified by faith alone</td>
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<td><strong>We are made</strong> righteous by <strong>sanctify grace</strong></td>
<td><strong>We are declared</strong> righteous by <strong>saving grace</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sanctification is the process of purifying or purging us of</td>
<td>1. Sanctification is a second process after salvation</td>
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<tr>
<td>temporal sins confessed.</td>
<td>2. God now sanctifies whom He justified.</td>
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<td>2. It is an active faith producing obedience/works unto</td>
<td>3. Redemption was provided through Christ's death</td>
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<td>righteousness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Redemption was provided through Christ's Resurrection and</td>
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<td>victory over Satan.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Penance</strong> is the sacrament of confession/repentance/absolution of temporal (our) sins that have damaged our relationship with God. It is the desire to reconcile with God</td>
<td><strong>Repentance</strong> is, for protestants, is more than confession but a commitment to turn around and cease sinning.</td>
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<td><strong>Indulgence</strong> is</td>
<td><strong>Indulgence is not part of Protestant teaching:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The remission of temporal punishment for sins already</td>
<td>- Christ died for all sin</td>
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<tr>
<td>forgiven.</td>
<td>- True repentance includes commitment to faithfulness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Indulgences supports living holy, through prayer, Scriptural reading, attending the Mass, among others.</td>
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Reason alone is not sufficient to understand all that was provided through Jesus’ death and resurrection. Faith is personable; Knowledge is experience; heart and mind are inseparable. We must go on faith:

1) **God** by his grace is the **only Savior of sinners**, that 2) **self-salvation is impossible**, and that 3) the **death of Jesus Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice** is the ultimate ground of justification.
There is a story of Orestes by Aeschylus, the Ancient Greek playwright, in which Orestes was tried for the crime of matricide. The Greek Furies sought justice according to law.

In Greek Mythology the “Furies” are the spirit of punishment, often represented as one of three goddesses who executed the curses pronounced upon criminals, tortured the guilty with stings of conscience, and inflicted famines and pestilences.

The final play of the Oresteia, called The Eumenides (Εὐμενίδες, Eumenídes), illustrates how the sequence of events in the trilogy ends up in the development of social order or a proper judicial system in Athenian society.

In this play, Orestes is hunted down and tormented by the Furies, a trio of goddesses known to be the instruments of justice, who are also referred to as the "Gracious Ones" (Eumenides). They relentlessly pursue Orestes for the killing of his mother. However, through the intervention of Apollo, Orestes is able to escape them for a brief moment while they are asleep and head to Athens under the protection of Hermes. Seeing the Furies asleep, Clytemnestra's ghost comes to wake them up to obtain justice on her son Orestes for killing her.

After waking up, the Furies hunt down Orestes again and when they find him, Orestes pleads to the goddess Athena for help and she responds by setting up a trial for him in Athens on the Areopagus. This trial is made up of a group of twelve Athenian citizens and is supervised by none other than Athena herself. Here Orestes is used as a trial dummy by Athena to set-up the first courtroom trial. He is also the object of central focus between the Furies, Apollo, and Athena.

After the trial comes to an end, the votes are tied. Athena casts the deciding vote and determines that Orestes will not be killed. This ultimately does not sit well with the Furies, but Athena eventually persuades them to accept the decision and, instead of violently retaliating against wrongdoers, become a constructive force of vigilance in Athens. She then changes their names from the Furies to "the Eumenides" which means "the Gracious Ones".

Athena then ultimately rules that all trials must henceforth be settled in court rather than being carried out personally.

Justice, in Plato’s Society, was thought not maintainable by the enforcement of law but by through forgiveness. They saw an eye for an eye as vengeful. Plato and Aristotle ascribe importance to law, neither regards the law as a universal fit for every person and situation. Instead, both advocate the importance of discerning the particulars of each situation in the name of equity. … Thus, although law is connected to justice, and justice is understood fundamentally as order, neither Plato nor Aristotle approaches a legalism that demands retribution in the name of a universal principle. The law is nothing but a means, a historically conditioned means, for the achievement of virtue.

“The point of the courts,” Prof Vidu maintains, “is not to uphold the law for the sake of law but to mediate and arbitrate between competing interests.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Jesus Died</th>
<th>Proposed Theory</th>
<th>Isaiah 53</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>John 16:9</th>
<th>John 12</th>
<th>I Corinthians 1:30</th>
<th>It is Finished John 19:30</th>
<th>Christ's Mediation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Because He Loved us</td>
<td>The Moral Influence Theory</td>
<td>Jesus’ focus was on us. Vs. 6: Like sheep...gon e astray</td>
<td>We were enemies. Romans 5:10</td>
<td>As Teacher to lead us into all truth (righteousness)</td>
<td>Vs 32: I am the Light that has come into the world, in order that all who believe in me will not remain in darkness</td>
<td>He sanctified us because in need of guidance and counsel.</td>
<td>Finally. Galatians 4:4: When the circumstance of history were right, Jesus came”</td>
<td>Lord</td>
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<td>Because we were sinners (estranged from a Holy God who wanted our fellowship )</td>
<td>The Penal Substitution Theory.</td>
<td>Jesus’ focus was on God. He took our punishment to satisfy the justice of God. Vs. 5: punished for our peace.</td>
<td>We were sinners. Romans 3:23</td>
<td>As Savior because of our sins</td>
<td>Vs 46: And I, If I am lifted up on the Cross, I will win over hearts. As Savior because of our sins</td>
<td>He justified us because we were guilty.</td>
<td>Permanently. Hebrew 10:20: the offering of the body of Jesus Christ happened once for all time.</td>
<td>Savior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because Satan needed to be defeated</td>
<td>The Christos - Victor Theory.</td>
<td>Jesus’ focus was on our enemy. Satan. Vs. 12: Divide the spoils. (Colossians 2:15)</td>
<td>We were spiritually defeated and imprisoned. Romans 5:14; Galatians 5:1</td>
<td>As Victor – the prince of this world is judged</td>
<td>Vs 31: Now this world is judged, and the ruler of the world is thrown out.</td>
<td>He has redeemed us because we were in bondage to Satan’s power.</td>
<td>Completely. Luke 24:27: Beginning at Moses’s writings and all the books of the prophets</td>
<td>Victor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Offering</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>Features</td>
<td>Significance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burnt Offering</td>
<td>Deuteronomy: 33:10; Psalm. 51:19; Numbers 28; Leviticus 2:13; 6:8-13</td>
<td>Male animal less the thigh; entrails, wings, or feathers. Genesis 32:32.</td>
<td>Devotion &amp; service. The only sacrifice Gentiles could offer. Salted as a sign of covenant  (Romans 12:1).</td>
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<td>Sin Offering</td>
<td>Numbers 29:12-38; Leviticus 5:1-13; 16:29-34; 23:27</td>
<td>Represented the sins of the people or sinning “in ignorance.” (never a ram used in the guilt offering). Substitutions allowed for poverty. Public sins require a male animal sacrifice; private sins, a female animal sacrifice.</td>
<td>To make atonement for the nation on festive occasions or as a general redemption. The most solemn of all sacrifices were those on the Day of Atonement. The High-priest stood before the Lord to purify all: the Sanctuary; the priests; the people of all defilement, ceremonial &amp; moral (Hebrews 2:17).</td>
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<td>Trespass or Guilt Offering*</td>
<td>Leviticus 5:14-19; 14:12, 21; Numbers 6:12; Isaiah 53:10; Psalm 51:4</td>
<td>Male animal (a ram or a lamb). Represented an individual's sin done “in ignorance.” Substitutions never allowed.</td>
<td>A ransom for a specific individual wrong/sin.” A wrong done against another was considered done against the Lord. Some offered trespass offerings pre-supposing guilt or living with a sense of shame, though no sin was specified.” (1 John 1:9).</td>
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<td>Peace Offering</td>
<td>Psalm 51:17; 54:6; 56:12; 116:17; Leviticus 7:11-12, 16</td>
<td>The offering of completeness. A special term is used to designate this “killing.” The only public offering called “most holy” accompanied by a meal and drink offering.</td>
<td>The grateful homage of a soul justified and accepted before God. Three types: for thanksgiving, vows, and strictly voluntary (Hebrews 13:20).</td>
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<td>Grain or Meal Offering</td>
<td>Leviticus 2:11-13; Psalm 40:7; Jeremiah 17:26</td>
<td>Always offered with either the burnt or the peace offering—an Omer of wheat made into 10 (number of completeness) or 12 (representing all Israel) cakes. (1 Chronicles 21:23).</td>
<td>“A gift” which when with the burnt offering is totally consumed in the fire, made with oil &amp; salt without yeast (pure). (Hebrews 10:22).</td>
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<td>Drink Offering</td>
<td>Exodus 29:14</td>
<td>Wine poured at the base of the altar</td>
<td>Fellowship (Matt 26:29; Rev 3:20).</td>
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<td>Incense Offering</td>
<td>Exodus 30:1-10; 37:29</td>
<td>A holy formula not used elsewhere</td>
<td>Prayer (Revelation 8:3-4)</td>
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* Sins committed in ignorance for want of knowledge, unintentional, through weakness, or did not know his liability at the time. Sins done intentionally (mens rea) were considered (lex talionis) punishable without a gratuitous forgiveness.

** With both the sin and guilt offering “repentance” must be genuine, that is, a remembrance of sins.

***Trespasses (individual sins) were violations of any of the 613 injunctions in the Mosaic Law.
**PASSOVER**

1. Sacrifice must be a lamb.  
   (Ex.12 V.3)

2. Lamb must be without blemish.  
   (Ex.12 V.5)

3. It must be in prime of its existence.  

4. Lamb's blood shed that they might have life.  
   (Ex.12 VV.6&7)

5. It was not enough that blood was shed. Everyone must apply it to their door in order to benefit from it.  
   (Ex.12 VV7,22)

6. Blood must be seen from outside.  
   (Ex.12 V.7)

7. No safety except behind the blood stained doors.  (Ex.12 V.7)

8. When safe behind the blood, they must feast upon lamb whose blood had saved them.  
   (Ex 12: 22)

9. Flesh must be eaten with bitter herbs.  
   (Ex.12 V.8)

10. Meal must be separated from all leaven.  
    (type of sin)

11. Israelites must maintain pilgrim attitude - loins girded - Shoes on feet - Staff in hand.  
    (Ex.12 V.11)

**REDEMPTION**

1. Christ was the Lamb of God.  
   (1Cor.5:7)

2. Christ was without spot or blemish.  
   (1Peter1:18-19)

3. Christ was in prime of His manhood when offered; (33 yrs. old)

4. Christ's blood was shed that all might have life:  
   John 3:16  
   (1 Peter 2:24)

5. It's not sufficient that His blood was shed - but each one wishing benefit from it must have it applied to his own heart by faith.  
   (Rom.3:25-26 - 10:9-10)

6. Christ must be openly and publicly confessed before men.  
   (Matt. 10:32-33)

7. These is no safety except behind the blood of Christ.  
   (Mark 16:16)

8. When safe under the blood of Christ - we must feed upon Christ whose blood has saved us from death.  
   (John 6:53-56)

9. We must always remember in a spirit of contrition what this redemption cost Christ.  

10. We must not practice sin avoiding the appearance of evil.  
    (1 John 3:9-10)

11. Those saved by the blood of Christ must maintain the pilgrim attitude in the world.  
    (1 Peter 2:11 - Heb. 11:13)