

*Redemption
Accomplished
and Applied*

by John Murray

Fifth Lecture

Presented by Dr. Richard Spencer

Review

- We covered the necessity of the atonement
- Murray says that the specific categories the Bible uses to describe the atonement can all be classified under the rubric of Christ's obedience
- Christ's obedience can be classified as active and passive
 - His active obedience refers to his keeping the positive demands of God's law
 - His passive obedience refers to his satisfying the penal sanctions of the law on our behalf
- But, in both, Jesus was fully active and willing

Review

- It is through union with Christ that we are saved – our sins are imputed to him and his righteousness is imputed to us (2 Cor 5:21), this is the central truth of soteriology
- The specific categories that Scripture uses to describe the atonement are:
 - Sacrifice
 - Propitiation
 - Reconciliation
 - Redemption

Review - Redemption

- Last time we were discussing the final “specific category” that Scriptures uses to describe the atonement, which is redemption

Just as sacrifice is directed to the need created by our guilt, propitiation to the need that arises from the wrath of God, and reconciliation to the need arising from our alienation from God, so redemption is directed to the bondage to which our sin has consigned us.

RA&A, pg 43

Review - Scriptural Basis

- Jesus himself indicated that his sacrifice was, in some sense, like the payment of a ransom:
the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Matt 20:28

- From what did Christ redeem his people?
 - ❖ From the curse of the law (not the law itself)
 - From the ceremonial law
 - From the law of works
 - From the guilt of sin
 - From the power of sin

Redeemed from the Ceremonial Law

- In Galatians Paul argues against legalism; salvation is not attained by keeping the law
- Near the end of Galatians 3:19 he asks, *What, then, was the purpose of the law?*
- He answers:
the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ... heirs according to promise

Galatians 3:24-29 (ESV)

Redeemed from the Ceremonial Law

- Paul then notes that heirs are treated differently at different times:

the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

Galatians 4:1-5 (ESV)

Redeemed from the Ceremonial Law

- Murray comments:

What is in view here is redemption from the tutelary bondage of the Mosaic economy. The people of God under the Old Testament were children of God by the divine adoption of grace. But they were as children under age, under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father (cf. Gal. 4:2). Of this tutelary, pedagogical discipline the Mosaic economy was the minister. RA&A, pg 44

- The ceremonial law was part of the Mosaic economy and has been abrogated (go look at Heb 7:11-12 and Rom 10:4)

Redeemed from the Ceremonial Law

- The difference between the people of God in the Old Testament and the New Testament is likened to the difference between a minor heir, still under the control of a pedagogue, and an heir who has come of age and is free
- Once the heir comes of age, he has been trained and no longer needs the external restraint provided by the pedagogue, but he *is still expected to live by the same rules!*
- Similarly, the moral law is still in effect, while the ceremonial and civil laws are not

The Church Has Come of Age

- So, the church has come of age and is no longer in need of the law as a pedagogue

But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jeremiah 31:33

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:26

Now, Redeemed from the Law of Works

- Murray says
“Christ has redeemed us from the necessity of keeping the law *as the condition of our justification and acceptance with God.*” RA&A, pg 45
- Can anyone be justified by keeping the law?
- Murray certainly did not intend to imply that anyone can be, elsewhere he wrote,
Paul says in Romans 2:13 that the doers of the law will be justified, but he goes on to show that there are none such, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God

Redeemed from the Law of Works

- Perfect righteousness is necessary for a right relationship with God; Christ redeemed us by perfectly fulfilling the law on our behalf

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Romans 5:19

- We obtain this righteousness through union with Christ, which is by grace through faith
sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

Romans 6:14

A Life Under Grace

- Grace is God's favor shown to those who deserve his wrath
- God's grace has power

God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2 Cor 9:8

Paul also wrote,

by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 1 Cor 15:10

Now, Redeemed from Sin

- In the introduction to Revelation, the apostle John wrote,
To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father ... Rev 1:5-6
- Which clearly established that we have been set free, or redeemed, from sin
- But Murray here focuses on two aspects of sin:
 - The guilt of sin
 - The power of sin

Redeemed from the Guilt of Sin

- The result is that our sins are forgiven and we are justified – this is a judicial, or forensic, act
- Scriptural basis:

all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Rom 3:23-24

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace Ephesians 1:7

Redeemed from the Power of Sin

- We are also redeemed from “the enslaving defilement and power of sin”
- Scriptural basis:

[Jesus Christ] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own

Titus 2:14

For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers

1 Peter 1:18

Redeemed from the Power of Sin

- Murray writes,

Redemption from the power of sin may be called the triumphal aspect of redemption ...

not only is Christ regarded as having died for the believer but the believer is represented as having died in Christ and as having been raised up with him to newness of life. ...

It is this fact of having died with Christ in the efficacy of his death and of having risen with him in the power of his resurrection that insures for all the people of God deliverance from the dominion of sin.

Redeemed from the Power of Sin

- Our union with Christ is much closer than just being associated with him in some sense. He is *with* us and we are *with* him in some deeply mysterious way so that his death and resurrection manifest themselves powerfully in our lives and we have power to overcome sin – power to control our behavior

Redeemed from the Power of Sin

- Prior to our conversion we were not able to not sin (*non posse non peccare*)
- After conversion, we are able to not sin (*posse non peccare*)
- Murray says that this forms the basis of the sanctification process – we have the power to overcome sin, Satan and the world

Redeemed from Satan?

- Some early church fathers thought of Christ's ransom as having been paid to Satan – but Anselm pointed out that Satan is a creature with no such authority (Why God Became Man, Bk 1, Ch 7), so the analogy of a ransom breaks down at this point
- But Murray points out there was a “great truth” the fathers were seeking to express

Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

John 12:31

Redeemed from Satan?

- Murray concludes, in part,
redemption from sin cannot be adequately conceived or formulated except as it comprehends the victory which Christ secured once for all over him who is the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience. RA&A, pg 50
- We must see that we are in a spiritual battle with real, powerful, enemies, or we will be defeated (see 2 Cor 2:11 and Eph 6:12f)

Application for Chapter Two

- The Nature of the atonement accomplished by Jesus Christ is such that we are not just forgiven, but radically changed and given power by grace and the indwelling Spirit
- We should:
 - Make our calling and election sure; do we exhibit the signs of new life? (if not, then repent!)
 - Be thankful for what God has done
 - Work, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be transformed day by day and to do the good works God has prepared for us to do (Eph 2:10)

The Perfection of the Atonement

- We are now ready to examine Chapter Three, wherein Murray defends the perfection of the atonement
- The atonement has been degraded in different ways:
 - The Roman Catholic Church impugns both its efficacy and once-for-all nature by their doctrines, notably the “sacrifice” of the mass
 - Modern liberalism reduces it to a mere example
 - True Christians sin by not firmly proclaiming it and living in a way that demonstrates its power

Only Christ Atones for Sin

- Murray begins by pointing out that only Jesus Christ can atone for sins
- There are still painful consequences for sin in this life, but we do not atone for our sin
- So, whether opposing Roman Catholicism, liberalism, or any other heresy, we must be careful to maintain the Biblical doctrine

If we once allow the notion of human satisfaction to intrude itself in our construction of justification or sanctification then we have polluted the river the streams whereof make glad the city of God.

The Perfection of the Atonement

- Murray examines the perfection under four headings:
 - The Historic Objectivity
 - The Finality
 - The Uniqueness
 - The Intrinsic Efficacy

The Historic Objectivity

- While it is true that God is not bound by time in the same way we are, nonetheless the atonement was made at a fixed point in the history of the world and is a real historical event

But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Galatians 4:4-5

The Historic Objectivity

- Paul emphasized the importance of the historicity of the atonement in his first letter to the church in Corinth

what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day ... if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. ... if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 14, 17

- Do not spiritualize Biblical history – either atonement has been accomplished, or not

The Finality

the atonement of which Scripture speaks is the vicarious obedience, expiation, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption performed by the Lord of glory when, once for all, he purged our sins and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

RA&A, pg 55

- It is true that Christ is in heaven interceding on our behalf and that we must believe and then persevere in faith, but the atonement is a completed work – Christ said, It is finished!

The Uniqueness

- The sacrifice of Christ was not, primarily, exemplary; that was a secondary purpose
- Re-read the passage from Machen's book on Christianity and Liberalism in our first lecture: these modern "theories of the atonement" err in that they ignore the dreadful reality of guilt, and make a mere persuasion of the human will all that is needed for salvation. They do indeed all contain an element of truth: ... But [these truths] are swallowed up in a far greater truth - that Christ died instead of us to present us faultless before the throne of God. Machen, ibid

The Uniqueness

- Murray states,

Christ has indeed given us an example that we should follow his steps. But it is never proposed that this emulation on our part is to extend to the work of expiation, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption which he accomplished.

From whatever angle we look upon his sacrifice we find its uniqueness to be as inviolable as the uniqueness of his person, of his mission, and of his office.

The Intrinsic Efficacy

- Murray summarizes,

The atonement is the provision of the Father's love and grace. But there is equal need for remembering that the work wrought by Christ was in itself intrinsically adequate to meet all the exigencies created by our sin and all the demands of God's holiness and justice.

Jesus met all the exigencies arising from our sin and he procured all the benefits that lead to, and are consummated in, the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

The Intrinsic Efficacy

- The Westminster Confession states it well:

The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, has fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for those whom the Father has given unto Him.

WCF, VIII, 5

Application

- Believe in the perfection of Christ's atonement:
 - **Its historicity**; reject spiritualizing Biblical truth
 - **Its finality**; make your calling and election sure, then rejoice in the assurance of your reward
 - **Its uniqueness**; reject multiculturalism and postmodern ideas about truth – preach Jesus, there is no other way to be saved
 - **Its efficacy**; Christ has done it all – we must humble ourselves, repent, trust and obey

Prepare for Next Session

- You should read Chapter Four on the Extent of the Atonement to prepare for our next session