

*Redemption
Accomplished
and Applied*

by John Murray

Third Lecture

Presented by Dr. Richard Spencer

Review

- We have established that:
 - The source of the atonement was God's love
 - Sinful man cannot redeem himself
 - God freely chose, in eternity past, to save some
 - The necessity of the atonement is an essential doctrine of Biblical Christianity (although the *type* of necessity is not essential)
 - Jesus himself said, "*Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*" (Luke 24:26, ESV)

Review

- Murray examines two views:
 - Hypothetical necessity
The main concern of those who hold this view is to uphold the sovereign free will of God
 - Consequent absolute necessity
Murray argues that this is the classic protestant position and, most importantly, the biblical view
- It is not inappropriate for us to examine whether or not the Bible provides a basis for saying that God had to accomplish redemption this way (e.g., he can't lie & is perfect)

Fourth Argument

- Fourth, Murray says that

A salvation from sin divorced from justification is an impossibility and justification of sinners without the God-righteousness of the Redeemer is unthinkable.

RA&A, pg. 17

- True salvation produces fellowship with God, which requires a positive righteousness in addition to forgiveness, and this righteousness cannot be found in any fallen person; therefore, Jesus' obedience, incarnation, death and resurrection are necessary

Fourth Argument

- To support this fourth argument, Murray adduces Galatians 3:21,
if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.
- He then notes that
What Paul is insisting upon is that if justification could have been secured by any other method than that of faith in Christ, by that method it would have been. RA&A, pg. 17
- Faith unites us to Christ & his righteousness

Fifth Argument

- Fifth, Murray says,

The cross of Christ is the supreme demonstration of the love of God ...

We must ask, however: would the cross of Christ be a supreme exhibition of love if there were no necessity for such costliness? RA&A, pg. 17

- We can join with Abraham in asking the rhetorical question,

Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?

Gen 18:25

Fifth Argument

- I personally find this argument compelling! How could a holy and righteous God pour out his wrath on his own Son if that were not the only way to secure salvation? Would not such an act be wicked?
- In fact, some object that substitutionary atonement itself *is* wicked!
 - But this ignores the fact that Christ voluntarily agreed to serve as a substitute sacrifice and that it was the only way to achieve the glorious end of displaying God's mercy, love and justice

Sixth Argument

- Sixth, Murray argues that the vindicatory justice of God requires the atonement; he writes,

It is this inviolable sanctity of God's law, the immutable dictate of holiness and the unflinching demand of justice, that makes mandatory the conclusion that salvation from sin without expiation and propitiation is inconceivable.

RA&A, pg. 18

- Expiation: to remove sins (without appeasing wrath)
- Propitiation: to appease God's wrath
- Let's look at some Scriptures ...

Sin Must be Punished

It is mine to avenge; I will repay. Deut 32:35

Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished Ex 34:7

the LORD will not leave the guilty unpunished Nah 1:3

with you the wicked cannot dwell. The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong. You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the LORD abhors. Psalm 5:4-6

- Romans 3:25-26 says that Christ's atonement was necessary so that God could "be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus." In other words, the atonement was necessary to uphold God's justice

Objections to the Necessity

- Two arguments that are often raised to the necessity of the atonement are:
 - First, doing so makes God inferior to man since man is commanded to freely forgive
 - But this ignores that sin is, first and foremost, rebellion against God, so the greater wrong is done to him. Also, Berkhof notes that “*God cannot be compared to a private individual ... He is the Judge of all the earth, and in that capacity must maintain the law and exercise strict justice.*”

Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 371

Objections to the Necessity

- The second argument often raised to the necessity of the atonement is:
 - Some claim that this view sets the Father and Son in opposition; the Father as a stern judge and the Son as a suffering Savior
 - But as Berkhof correctly notes, *“The Bible teaches us that the triune God provided freely for the salvation of sinners. ... The Father made the sacrifice of His Son, and the Son willingly offered Himself. There was no schism but the most beautiful harmony”*

Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, pg. 372

Summary of Murray's Arguments:

- To summarize, the six arguments adduced in favor of the atonement being a consequent absolute necessity are:
 - There are passages that create a strong presumption in favor of this view
 - There are passages that suggest the only alternative is for everyone go to hell
 - The gravity of sin requires such a sacrifice
 - Full salvation requires the righteousness of Christ
 - It is only an expression of love if it is necessary
 - God's vindicatory justice requires it

The Necessity of the Atonement

- Before we leave this topic, let's ponder two more quotes that summarize the issue well:

Might not God, by his absolute power, have pardoned men's guilt, and thrown the invading sin out of his creatures? but in regard of his truth pawned in his threatening, and in regard of his justice, which demanded satisfaction, he would not.

Charnock, *The Existence and Attributes of God*, Baker Books, 2005, Vol 2, pg 377

Also consider this quote from Guillebaud:

The judge of all the earth *must* do right. Therefore it was impossible by the necessities of his own being that he should deal lightly with sin, and compromise the claims of holiness. If sin could be forgiven at all, it must be on some basis which would vindicate the holy law of God, which is not a mere code, but the moral order of the whole creation. But such vindication must be supremely costly. Costly to whom? Not to the forgiven sinner, for there could be no price asked from him for his forgiveness; both because the cost is far beyond his reach, and because God loves to give and not sell.

continued

Therefore God himself undertook to pay a cost, to offer a sacrifice, so tremendous that the gravity of his condemnation of sin should be absolutely beyond question even as he forgave it, while at the same time the Love which impelled him to pay the price would be the wonder of angels, and would call forth the worshipping gratitude of the redeemed sinner.

H.E. Guillebaud, *Why the Cross?*, IVC, 1947, pg 130, 185

Application

- As we finish Chapter One on the necessity of the atonement, let's all purpose to meditate on the amazing love of the Triune God, which is expressed to the fullest possible extent in the incarnation, death, resurrection and session of Jesus Christ
- Do you love God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength?

The Nature of the Atonement

- We are now ready to start the second chapter of Murray's book
- Murray sets up the chapter by writing,
The more specific categories in terms of which the Scripture sets forth the atoning work of Christ are sacrifice, propitiation, reconciliation, and redemption. But we may properly ask if there is not some more inclusive rubric under which these more specific categories may be comprehended.
- He then proposes obedience to be that rubric

Obedience

- Murray writes,

The Scripture regards the work of Christ as one of obedience and uses this term, or the concept that it designates, with sufficient frequency to warrant the conclusion that obedience is generic and therefore embracive enough to be viewed as the unifying or integrating principle.

- Christ himself said,

I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me John 6:38

The Obedience of Christ

- Andrew Murray wrote,

The object of Christ's life of obedience was threefold: (1) As an Example, to show us what true obedience was. (2) As our Surety, by His obedience to fulfill all righteousness for us. (3) As our Head, to prepare a new and obedient nature to impart to us.

Andrew Murray, *The School of Obedience*, from Part II, *The Obedience of Christ*, Christian Miracle Foundation Press. Kindle Edition.

The Obedience of Christ

- Andrew Murray says Christ's obedience is:
 - An example (cf 1 Peter 2:21)

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God ... became obedient to death Philippians 2:5-6,8
 - To fulfill all righteousness for us

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 Rom 5:19
 - To prepare an obedient nature to impart to us

we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 1 John 3:2

The Obedience of Christ

- Andrew Murray also wrote,

Let every one of us who would know what obedience is, consider well: It is the obedience of Christ that is the secret of the righteousness and salvation I find in Him. The obedience is the very essence of that righteousness: obedience is salvation.

Andrew Murray, *The School of Obedience*, from Part II, *The Obedience of Christ*, Christian Miracle Foundation Press. Kindle Edition.

The Obedience of Christ

- What did Christ himself say?

The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

John 10:17-18

- Note that we are explicitly told the reason the Father loves the son is that he was obedient to the command he received!

Active and Passive Obedience

- Murray corrects a common misunderstanding of what is meant by Christ's active and passive obedience

- These do not refer to his life and death

No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.

John 10:18

- Christ was active in every part of his obedient life and death, nothing was done to him without his permission (or it wouldn't have been obedience)

Active and Passive Obedience

- The proper meaning of these terms relates to two different aspects of God's law:
 - Penal sanctions
 - Positive demands
- Christ was born “under law” (Gal 4:4) and as our representative he fulfilled both aspects of God's law; as Murray writes,

He perfectly met both the penal and the preceptive requirements of God's law. The passive obedience refers to the former and the active obedience to the latter.

RA&A, pg 22

The Nature of Christ's Obedience

- Consider three passages of Scripture:

In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Hebrews 2:10

he had to be made like his brothers in every way ... that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 2:17-18

The Nature of Christ's Obedience

- And:

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Hebrews 5:8-9

- How could it be said that the eternally perfect Son of God was made perfect, or that he learned obedience?
- Murray points out that Jesus rendered his obedience *in his human nature*

The Nature of Christ's Obedience

- Murray concludes from these verses:
 1. It was not through mere incarnation that Jesus wrought our salvation and secured redemption
 2. It was not through mere death that salvation was accomplished
 3. It was not simply through the death upon the cross that Jesus became the author of salvation
 4. The death upon the cross, as the climactic requirement of the price of redemption, was *discharged* as the supreme act of obedience; it was not death resistlessly inflicted but death upon the cross willingly and obediently wrought

The Nature of Christ's Obedience

- Murray concludes this section by noting:
It was the obedience learned and rendered through the whole course of humiliation that made him perfect as the captain of salvation. RA&A, pp 23-24
- And, finally,
we become the beneficiaries of [Christ's obedience], indeed the partakers of it, by union with him. It is this that serves to advertise the significance of that which is the central truth of all soteriology, namely, union and communion with Christ. RA&A, pp 24

Specific Biblical Categories

- Next, we examine the specific categories that Scripture uses to describe the atonement:
 - Sacrifice
 - Propitiation
 - Reconciliation
 - Redemption

Sacrifice

- The New Testament writers clearly portray Christ as a sacrifice; for example,

God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.

Romans 3:25

Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Eph 5:2

- We must turn to the Old Testament sacrificial system to understand what they meant by this terminology

Old Testament Sacrifices

- Murray points out that the Old Testament sacrifices had to do with the removal of sin and guilt, i.e., expiation
 - A man who sinned had to confess and put his hands on the head of the animal (Lev 1:4), which symbolized the transferring of his sin (Lev 16:21)
- Murray explains the significance:

The notion in essence was that the sin of the offerer was imputed to the offering and the offering bore as a result the death-penalty. It was substitutive endurance of the penalty or liability due to sin.

Christ's Sacrifice

- Therefore, the sacrifice of Christ is also expiatory – he took away our guilt
- But there are also critically important differences:
 - Christ was not just the sacrifice, but the priest too (Heb 9:11)
 - Christ's blood was efficacious to cleanse the conscience (Heb 9:14)
 - Christ's sacrifice was once for all time (Heb 9:12)

Application

- We need to reject the idea of a carnal Christian that is prevalent in the modern church – God demands obedience from his children, it is the *sine qua non* of real faith

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him. ... If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

John 14:21,23

Prepare for Next Session

- You should finish Chapter Two to prepare for our next session