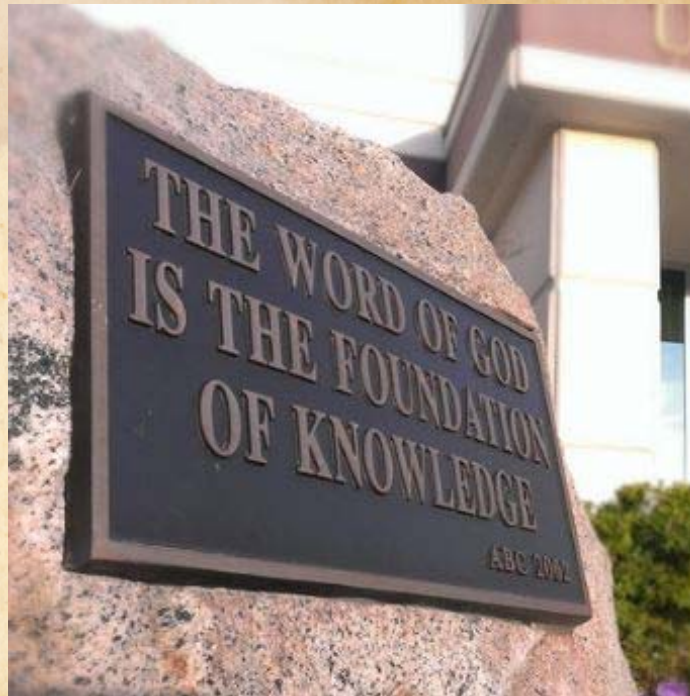


Weeknight Bible Study

January 27, 2022

Fundamental Beliefs of the United Church of God (Booklet)

United Church of God, SF Bay Area



Check-In Goals:

1. Fellowship in a Spiritually Uplifting focus in God's Word
2. Hear from All Participants as equally as possible

Please limit comments to no more than 2 minutes until everyone has had an opportunity to speak.

3. Discuss / Highlight / Collect Wisdom

Discussion Topic: Fundamental #6. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

- > Christ willingly gave up His throne and became a human being to live out a PERFECT physical mortal life... knowing what the end of that life would be.
- > He took on EVERYONE's sins... so we could be forgiven for the penalty which is death.
- > Because He was God His sacrifice was the only one capable of doing this...
- > Without this sacrifice we do NOT have any way to be reconciled to God.
- > Even IF we were able to live a sinless life we would ONLY maybe be able to 'save' ourselves...
- > 'The Precious Blood of Christ' is of supreme value. (I Peter 1:18-19)
- > The evident love of God the Father to be willing to give His Son for us... desiring an expanded family in which They could bestow their inheritance.
- > Christ chose to die the horrible death He suffered so that we could understand the depth of sin and its effects.
- > The new covenant... includes the imprinting of God's Law & Way onto our hearts. (Philippians 2:5 NKJV Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,) It is something to work toward... Christ's sacrifice gives us access to The Father with Christ as Mediator at His right hand... In this we have hope!!
- > Sin has an effect and a price... God's wrath is stirred against all that stands against His perfect and beautiful plan of bringing many sons to glory.
- > **Christ's sacrifice brings HOPE to us & ALL mankind!**

Belief Statement:

#6. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

Fundamental Belief Statement:

We believe God so loved the world of helpless sinners that He gave His only begotten Son, who, though in all points tempted as we are, lived without sin in the human flesh. That Son, Jesus Christ, died as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. His life, because He is the creator of all humanity, is of greater value than the sum total of all human life. His death is, therefore, sufficient to pay the penalty for every human being's sins. In paying this penalty He has made it possible, according to God's plan for each person and for humanity as a whole, for us to have our sins forgiven and to be released from the death penalty (Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 10:12; John 1:18; John 3:16; Colossians 1:16-17, Colossians 1:22; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10; Ephesians 1:11; Revelation 13:8).

Booklet section audio... <https://www.ucg.org/system/storage/serve/1345006/06-the-sacrifice-of-jesus-christ.mp3>

Discussion Scriptures

#6. Scriptures

Hebrews 4:15 NKJV For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 9:15 NKJV And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

Hebrews 10:12 NKJV But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God,

John 1:18 NKJV No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

John 3:16 NKJV For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Discussion Scriptures

#6. Scriptures (Continued)

Colossians 1:16-17 NKJV For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. (17) And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

Colossians 1:22 NKJV in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—

Ephesians 1:11 NKJV In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Revelation 13:8 NKJV All who dwell on the earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

1 John 2:2 NKJV And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

1 John 4:10 NKJV In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Term Definition

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-questions-and-answers/what-is-a-propitiation>

What is a "propitiation"?

Posted on Jun 21, 2011 2 comments Estimated reading time: 2 minutes

The New King James Version refers to Christ four times as our propitiation. What does this word mean?

Propitiation means “the removal of wrath by the offering of a gift” (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1986, “Propitiation”). It refers to an action or object used to make peace or repair a breach between two parties—in this case, describing Jesus Christ’s sacrifice as the atonement for our sins against God.

God hates sin, so the only way our relationship with Him can be made right is by Christ’s gift of His life to pay our death penalty. That’s why John writes, “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Propitiation here conveys sin being covered and remitted (Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words, 1985, “Propitiation”). It is translated from the Greek word *hilaskomai*, which itself is often used to translate the Hebrew word *kippur* (atonement).

Term Definition - Continued

<https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-questions-and-answers/what-is-a-propitiation>

What is a "propitiation"?

Posted on Jun 21, 2011 2 comments Estimated reading time: 2 minutes

The New King James Version refers to Christ four times as our propitiation. What does this word mean?

Here's how other translations render the last part of 1 John 4:10: "as an atoning sacrifice for our sins" (New International Version), "as a sacrifice to take away our sins" (New Living Translation), "to die in our place to take away our sins" (New Century Version) and "as the remedy for the defilement of our sins" (New English Bible).

The other verses that contain the word propitiation are Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17 and 1 John 2:2.

The New Bible Dictionary sums it up this way: "'Propitiation' is a reminder that God is implacably opposed to everything that is evil, that his opposition may properly be described as 'wrath,' and that this wrath is put away only by the atoning work of Christ" (1982, "Propitiation").

Example Apologetic Discussion

Fundamental #6. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ

Discussion w/ Someone Who believes Christ was just a great man or maybe a prophet?

- > Ask: how a great man or a prophet can also be a liar?
- > Ask them to read with you example of claims of His divinity... (John 3:16; John 18:36-37; John 1:1-3, 14; John 17:4-6; John 8:53-59)
- > Proof of His divinity and sacrifice raises hope of the effect in our lives and possibility of our future in His Kingdom... (Ask them to read aloud I John 4:14-17)
- > Bring it back to the here and now... ask: what do we need to do now to have a part in that hope?
- > Read: **Acts 4:10-12** NKJV let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. (11) This is the 'STONE WHICH WAS REJECTED BY YOU BUILDERS, WHICH HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE.' (12) Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."
- > There is so much available to you to look further into Christ and His wonderful Way of life at www.ucg.org.

Example UCG article: "Was Jesus the Promised Messiah?"

url = <https://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/bible-study-course/bible-study-course-lesson-5/was-jesus-the-promised-messiah>

Example Apologetic Reference-1 a

Fundamental #6. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Perspectives)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religious_perspectives_on_Jesus

Religious perspectives on Jesus

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **religious perspectives on Jesus** vary among world religions.^[1] Jesus' teachings and the retelling of his life story have significantly influenced the course of **human history**, and have directly or indirectly affected the lives of billions of people, even non-Christians.^{[1][2][3]} He is considered by many to be one of the most influential persons to have ever lived, finding a significant place in numerous cultural contexts.^[4]

Christianity teaches that Jesus is the **Messiah** (Christ) foretold in the **Old Testament** and the **Son of God**. Christians believe that through **his death and resurrection**, humans can be reconciled to God and thereby are offered salvation and the promise of **eternal life**.^[5] These teachings emphasize that as the willing **Lamb of God**, Jesus *chose to* suffer in **Calvary** as a sign of his full obedience to the will of his Father, as an "agent and servant of God".^{[6][7]} Christians view Jesus as a role model, whose God-focused life believers are encouraged to imitate.

In **Islam**, Jesus (commonly transliterated as *Isa*) is one of God's highest-ranked and most-beloved **prophets**. Islam considers Jesus to be neither the incarnation nor the Son of God. Islamic texts emphasize a strict notion of monotheism (*tawhid*) and forbid the association of partners with God, which would be idolatry (*shirk*).

In the **Druze** faith, Jesus is considered one of God's important prophets and the **Messiah**.^{[8][9]}

The **Bahá'í Faith** considers Jesus to be one of many **manifestations of God**, who are a series of personages who reflect the attributes of the divine into the human world. Bahá'ís reject the idea that divinity was contained with a single human body.

Apart from his own **disciples** and followers, the **Jews** of Jesus' day generally rejected him as the Messiah, as do the great majority of Jews today. Mainstream **Jewish** scholars argue that Jesus neither fulfilled the Messianic prophecies in the **Tanakh** nor embodied the personal qualifications of the Messiah. **Sikhism** views Jesus as a high-ranked Holy man or saint.

Other world religions such as **Buddhism** have no particular view on Jesus, and have but a minor intersection with Christianity. For non-religious perspectives on Jesus, see **historical Jesus**.

Example Apologetic Reference-2a

Fundamental #6. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ (7 Theories of the Atonement Summarized)

<https://www.sdmorrison.org/7-theories-of-the-atonement-summarized/> [video]...

#1 The Moral Influence Theory

One of the earliest theories for the atonement is the Moral Influence theory, which simply taught that Jesus Christ came and died in order to bring about a positive change to humanity. This moral change comes through the teachings of Jesus alongside His example and actions. The most notable name here is that of Augustine from the 4th century, whose influence has almost single-handedly had the greatest impact upon Western Christianity. He affirmed the Moral Influence theory as the main theory of the Atonement (alongside the Ransom theory as well).

Within this theory the death of Christ is understood as a catalyst to reform society, inspiring men and women to follow His example and live good moral lives of love. In this theory, the Holy Spirit comes to help Christians produce this moral change. Logically, in this theory, the Eschatological development too becomes about morality, where it is taught that after death the human race will be judged by their conduct in life. This in turn creates a strong emphasis on free will as the human response to follow Jesus' example. Although Augustine himself differs here in that he did not teach free will, but instead that human beings are incapable of changing themselves, and require God to radically alter their lives sovereignly through the Holy Spirit.

This theory focuses on not just the death of Jesus Christ, but on His entire life. This sees the saving work of Jesus not only in the event of the crucifixion, but also in all the words He has spoken, and the example He has set. In this theory, the cross is merely a ramification of the moral life of Jesus. He is crucified as a martyr due to the radical nature of His moral example. In this way, the Moral Influence theory emphasizes Jesus Christ as our teacher, our example, our founder and leader, and ultimately, as a result, our first martyr.

#2 The Ransom Theory

The Ransom Theory of the Atonement is one of the first major theories for the Atonement. It is often held alongside the Moral Influence Theory, and usually deals more with the actual death of Jesus Christ, what it actually means and the effect it has upon humanity. This theory finds its roots in the Early Church, particularly in Origen from the 3rd century. This theory essentially teaches that Jesus Christ died as a ransom sacrifice, paid either to Satan (the most dominant view) or to God the Father. Jesus' death then acts as a payment to satisfy the debt on the souls of the human race, the same debt we inherited from Adam's original sin.

The Ransom view could be summarized like this:

"Essentially, this theory claimed that Adam and Eve sold humanity over to the devil at the time of the Fall' hence, justice required that God pay the Devil a ransom, for the Devil did not realize that Christ could not be held in the bonds of death. Once the Devil accepted Christ's death as a ransom, this theory concluded, justice was satisfied and God was able to free us from Satan's grip." ¹

Redemption in this theory means to buy back, and purchase the human race from the clutches of the Devil. The main controversy here with this theory is the act of paying off the Devil. Some have written that this is not a fair statement to say that all Ransom Theorists believe that the Devil is paid, but rather in this act of Ransom Christ frees humanity from the bondage of sin and death. In this way, Ransom relates the *Christus Victor* theory. But it's worth differentiating here because in one way these views are similar, but in another way, they are drastically different.

#3 *Christus Victor*

Classically, the *Christus Victor* theory of Atonement is widely considered to be the dominant theory for most of the historical Christian Church. In this theory, Jesus Christ dies in order to defeat the powers of evil (such as sin, death, and the devil) in order to free mankind from their bondage. This is related to the Ransom view with the difference being that there is no payment to the devil or to God. Within the *Christus Victor* framework, the cross did not pay off anyone but defeated evil thereby setting the human race free.

Gustaf Aulen argued that this theory of the Atonement is the most consistently held theory for church history, especially in the early church up until the 12th century before Anselm's satisfaction theory came along. He writes that "the work of Christ is first and foremost a victory over the powers which hold mankind in bondage: sin, death, and the devil." ² He calls this theory the "classic" theory of the Atonement. While some will say that *Christus Victor* is compatible with other theories of the Atonement, others argue that it is not. Though I have found that most theologians believe that *Christus Victor* is true, even if it is not for them the primary theory of Christ's death.

#4 The Satisfaction Theory (Anselm)

In the 12th century, Anselm of Canterbury proposed a satisfaction theory for the Atonement. In this theory, Jesus Christ's death is understood as a death to satisfy the justice of God. Satisfaction here means restitution, the mending of what was broken, and the paying back of a debt. In this theory, Anselm emphasizes the justice of God and claims that sin is an injustice that must be balanced. Anselm's satisfaction theory says essentially that Jesus Christ died in order to pay back the injustice of human sin and to satisfy the justice of God.

This theory was developed in reaction to the historical dominance of the Ransom theory, that God paid the devil with Christ's death. Anselm saw that this theory was logically flawed, because what does God owe Satan? Therefore, in contrast with the Ransom theory, Anselm taught that it is humanity who owes a debt to God, not God to Satan. Our debt, in this theory, is that of injustice. Our injustices have stolen from the justice of God and therefore must be paid back. Satisfaction theory then postulates that Jesus Christ pays back God in His death on the cross to God. This is the first Atonement theory to bring up the notion that God is acted upon by the Atonement (i.e. that Jesus satisfies God).

Example Apologetic Reference-2b

Fundamental #6. The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ (7 Theories of the Atonement Summarized)

<https://www.sdmorrison.org/7-theories-of-the-atonement-summarized/> [video]...

#5 The Penal Substitutionary Theory

Penal Substitutionary Atonement is a development of the Reformation. The Reformers, Specifically Calvin and Luther, took Anselm's Satisfaction theory and modified it slightly. They added a more legal (or forensic) framework into this notion of the cross as satisfaction. The result is that within Penal Substitution, Jesus Christ dies to satisfy God's wrath against human sin. Jesus is punished (penal) in the place of sinners (substitution) in order to satisfy the justice of God and the legal demand of God to punish sin. In the light of Jesus' death, God can now forgive the sinner because Jesus Christ has been punished in the place of the sinner, in this way meeting the retributive requirements of God's justice. This legal balancing of the ledgers is at the heart of this theory, which claims that Jesus died for legal satisfaction. It's also worth mentioning that in this theory the notion of imputed righteousness is postulated.

This theory of the Atonement contrasts with Anselm's Satisfaction Theory in that God is not satisfied with a debt of justice being paid by Jesus, but that God is satisfied with punishing Jesus in the place of mankind. The notion that the cross acts upon God, conditioning Him to forgiveness, originates from Anselm's theory, but here in Penal Substitution the means are different. This theory of the Atonement is perhaps the most dominant today, especially among the Reformed, and the evangelical.

#6 The Governmental Theory

The Governmental Theory of the Atonement is a slight variation upon the Penal Substitutionary theory, which is notably held in Methodism. The main difference here is the extent to which Christ suffered. In the Governmental Theory, Jesus Christ suffers the punishment of our sin and propitiates God's wrath. In this way, it is similar to Penal Substitution. However, in the Governmental Theory, Jesus Christ does not take the exact punishment we deserve, He takes a punishment. Jesus dies on the cross therefore to demonstrate the displeasure of God towards sin. He died to display God's wrath against sin and the high price which must be paid, but not to specifically satisfy that particular wrath. The Governmental Theory also teaches that Jesus died only for the church, and if you by faith are part of the church, you can take part in God's salvation. The church then acts as the sort of hiding place from God's punishment. This view contrasts both the Penal and Satisfaction models but retains the fundamental belief that God cannot forgive if Jesus does not die a propitiating death.

#7 The Scapegoat Theory

The Scapegoat Theory is a modern Atonement theory rooted in the philosophical concept of the Scapegoat. Here the key figures Rene Girard and James Allison. Within this theory of the Atonement Jesus Christ dies as the Scapegoat of humanity. This theory moves away from the idea that Jesus died in order to act upon God (as in PSA, Satisfaction, or Governmental), or as payment to the devil (as in Ransom). Scapegoating therefore is considered to be a form of non-violent atonement, in that Jesus is not a sacrifice but a *victim*. There are many Philosophical concepts that come up within this model, but in a general sense, we can say that Jesus Christ as the Scapegoat means the following. 1) Jesus is killed by a violent crowd. 2) The violent crowd kills Him believing that He is guilty. 3) Jesus is proven innocent, as the true Son of God. 4) The crowd is therefore deemed guilty.

James Allison summarizes the Scapegoating Theory like this, "Christianity is a priestly religion which understands that it is God's overcoming of our violence by substituting himself for the victim of our typical sacrifices that opens up our being able to enjoy the fullness of creation as if death were not."

Conclusions

Each theory presented here is dense and complex, but I hope you can learn from the overall focus of each. I personally believe that we need to move beyond some of these theories and progress into a more robust theory of atonement. But thankfully, at the end of the day, we aren't saved by theories. We're saved by Jesus! *How* that happens may be fun to discuss and theorized about, but only in the sight of the fact that it's the *who* that matters far more!

Article / Reference / Sermon... Recommendations (w/ url links):

> UCG Article: “The Greatest Sacrifice” by Mr. Scott Ashley

url = <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-magazine/the-greatest-sacrifice-0>

He sacrificed greatly when He gave His life for our sins. But He also sacrificed greatly when He gave up His immortal existence as God!

> UCG Article: “What Was the Purpose of Christ's Death?” by Mr. Jerold Aust

url = <https://www.ucg.org/the-good-news/what-was-the-purpose-of-christs-death>

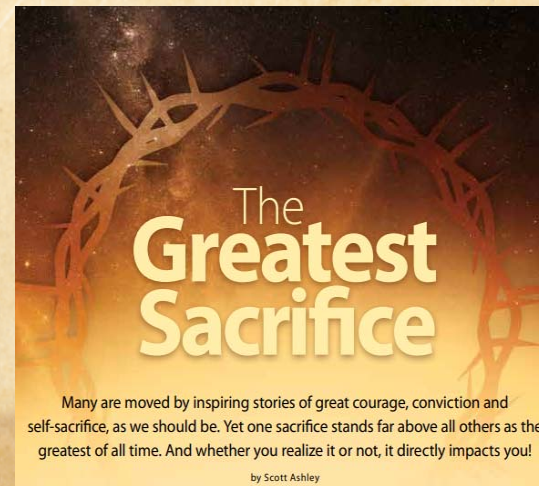
Millions of Christians believe that Jesus Christ died for them. But do they really know why? Why was Jesus Christ's death really necessary?

> UCG Sermon: “The Sacrifice of Jesus Christ” Presented by Mr. Ralph Helge

url = <https://www.ucg.org/sermons/the-sacrifice-of-jesus-christ-5>

> Beyond Today Daily: “How to Become a Living Sacrifice”

url = <https://www.ucg.org/beyond-today/beyond-today-daily/how-to-become-a-living-sacrifice>




God sent His Son to save the world, not to condemn it. During this time of year, with the upcoming Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread holy days, we reflect on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ - the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. How did Jesus' mission solve the dilemma of mankind and consequent death penalty looming on all? This message examines that question, focusing on the following aspects of that sacrifice - in part and as a whole: 1) the fleshly body of Jesus Christ, 2) His blood, 3) His death and 4) His resurrection.

> General Audio Resource: ABC Comparative Religion

Review of the world's major religions and the beliefs of each compared with Scripture.

Comparative Religion I url = <https://abc.ucg.org/courses/comparative-religion-i>

Comparative Religion II url = <https://abc.ucg.org/courses/comparative-religion-ii>



~ The End ~
& FELLOWSHIP :-)

