

Jesus: The Person and Work of Christ

1. Christology is the study of the biblical doctrine of Christ
 - a. The Person of Christ
 - i. Nature of the **Incarnation**
 - ii. Jesus as God-Man
 - b. The Work of Christ
 - i. Nature of the **Atonement**
 - ii. Death and Resurrection
2. The doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement are at the heart of the Christian faith.

Discussion:

- I. The Person of Christ
 - A. Scriptural Data
 1. Deity
 - a. The Word of God become flesh, Jn. 1:1-18
 - b. Equality with God, made in form of man, Phil. 2:5-8
 2. Humanity
 - a. Physically born (Lk. 2:7, 11)
 - b. Experienced temptation (Mt. 4:2); experienced growth in moral life (Heb. 5:7-10)
 - c. Experienced exhaustion (Jn. 4:6); weary and sleeping (Mk. 4:38)
 - d. Experienced growth in mental life (Lk. 2:52); had mental limitations (Mk. 13:32)
 - e. Ultimately, suffered and died (Lk. 23:33, 46)
 3. Belief in the true humanity and deity of Christ is essential to biblical Christianity (**1 Jn. 4:1-3**).
 - a. The Father and the Spirit testified at the baptism to the deity of Jesus John (Jn. 1:32-34)
 - b. The water and blood testified at the crucifixion of the humanity of Jesus (1 Jn. 5:6-8)
 4. Jesus' relationship to God is explained to two phrases in the Scriptures.
 - a. **Son of God**
 - i. To the Jews "son" denoted a moral kinship with God (even people can be considered sons of God if they are peacemakers, i.e., Mt. 5:8).
 - ii. To the Greeks with a tendency to give the word "son" more of a metaphysical connotation rather than a moral one. So the "son" denoted derivation of being in that the Son is derived from the Father and is the only begotten of the Father.
 - b. **Word of God**
 - i. To the Jews this connoted the creative activity of God who simply "spoke" his will and created all things. So if Christ is the Word of God then he is the self-revealing God who has come to *re-create* all things—beginning with mankind itself.
 - ii. To the Greeks, the Word denoted the reason or logic of the universe (or of God if coming from a Christian perspective). Thus, Christ was the embodiment of the reason eternally immanent in the mind of God.
 - B. But how can Jesus be both God and man?
 1. The Scripture asserts that Jesus is both *truly God and truly man* but doesn't articulate *how*.
 - a. **God didn't turn himself into a man** (*a la*, Zeus into a bull or swan). This would imply that he ceased to be God in the incarnation
 - b. **God did not simply come to dwell in a man**. This maintains a separation between two persons (like indwelling of H.S. doesn't make us divine, or demon possession doesn't change the person's essence.)
 - c. Instead, **Jesus is both God and man simultaneously**.

- d. God added human nature to his divine nature. It was addition, rather than subtraction.
 2. The assertion is obviously extraordinary. And initially it seems incoherent or contradictory.
 - a. Both finite and infinite? Omniscient and Ignorant? Creature and creator?
 - b. Sounds as incoherent as a married bachelor or a round square.
 3. The church of the earlier centuries struggled with how to conceive of and articulate the deity of Christ in order to avoid logical contradiction.
- C. **Historical Overview** (*follows William Lane Craig, noted theologian and Christian philosopher*):
 Following the **Trinitarian** controversies of the first 3 centuries, **Christological** controversies flourished.
1. The heart of the controversy can be explained in terms of the Antiochene and Alexandrian philosophical/theological schools.
 2. But probably best categorized as a conflict between the Monophysites and the Dyophysites.
 - a. Monophysite view (*physis* = nature, *mono* = “one”) Christ had but one nature in a sort of mixture of humanity and divinity (part God and part man)
 - b. Dyophysite view (*physis* = nature, *duo* = “two”) Christ had two natures (fully God and fully man)
 - **Alexandrian Christology** (Monophysitism) (*one nature, one [truncated] person*)
 1. Apollinarius, bishop of Laodicea, and Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria are examples.
 - a. Humans are made up of body, soul (animating force), and mind/intellect.
 - b. Apollinarius taught that Jesus lacked a human mind/intellect but had a divine mind (the Word) (Gk., *nous*, replaced by *ho logos*) with a human body (Gk., *soma*) and soul (Gk., *psyche*).
 2. Apollinarianism was rejected at the synod of Rome in A.D. 377 based on...
 - a. A human body and soul without a human mind is a truncation of human nature. Jesus didn’t have a human will. Jesus wasn’t fully human.
 - i. This undercuts Christ’s **Person!**
 - ii. Gregory of Nyssa accused on Apollinarius of saying that the incarnation amounted to God becoming an animal!
 - iii. Also, this prevented the possibility of Jesus’ feeling the full thrust of temptation to sin since the *nous* is the target of temptation.
 - b. In order for Christ to save human beings, he had to assume human nature. If Christ did not have a human mind (and will) then Christ was only “animal” and not fully human, and therefore, the human mind (and will) cannot be redeemed.
 - i. This undercuts Christ’s **work!**
 - ii. “*That which is not assumed is not saved*” became a catch phrase for the controversy. **See 1 Cor. 15:21.**
 - iii. Christ assumed not a human nature, but an animal nature.
 - c. The Coptic Church (Egyptian Church) still holds to this basic Christology.
 - **Antiochene Christology** (Dyophysitism) (*two natures, two [divided] persons*)
 1. Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, are examples.
 - a. Theodore taught that in Christ there are two *hypostases*/individual property bearers—two Sons, a divine *hypostasis* and a human *hypostasis* that are somehow combined in Christ, but were displayed together as one “*prosopon*”/face/character.
 - i. It sounds like two persons in one person.

- ii. The word hypostasis was used in the Trinitarian discussions to refer to 3 “persons” in one God.
 - b. Nestorius was more explicit in saying that there were two “persons” in Christ similar to the Word simply indwelling the human, Jesus of Nazareth, when he was conceived in Mary.
 - c. Thus, Nestorius rejected the terminology of Mary as *theotikos* (God-bearer).
 - 2. This doctrine was condemned at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431.
 - a. This splits the person of Christ in two. It makes two separate “sons.” It failed to posit a genuine union of divinity and humanity. Undercuts the **Person**.
 - i. Opponents asserted that the Bible seems clear that there is only one Son.
 - ii. Nestorius’ view also implied that it wasn’t the divine Logos that suffered and died. It was the human person born of Mary. Undercuts the **work**!
 - b. And implies the logical contradiction that there are two persons in one person.
- D. Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451)
1. *We... confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood, truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial [homoousios] with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial [homoousios] with us according to the manhood, like us in all things except sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God [theotokos], according to the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means taken away because of the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person [prosopon] and one Subsistence [hypostasis], not divided or separated into two Persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God, Word, Lord Jesus Christ...*
 2. This became the final statement of orthodox Christology.
 - a. One Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with two natures...
 - i. Consubstantial (*homoousios*) with the Father according to the Godhead.
 - ii. Consubstantial (*homoousios*) with us according to Manhood.
 - b. [Eternity]
 - i. Begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead
 - ii. In these latter day, for us and for our salvation born of the Virgin Mary (*theotokos* = God bearer)
 - c. To be acknowledged in two natures
 - i. Without confusion (referring to the two natures)
 - ii. Without change (referring to the two natures)
 - iii. Without division (referring to the one person)
 - iv. Without separation (referring to the one person)
 3. The property of each nature is preserved fully intact
 - i. In one person (*prosopon*)
 - ii. And one substance (*hypostasis*)
 4. Part of the brilliance of the statement is that it doesn’t attempt to explain *how* two natures can co-exist in one person. But it does propose that, though there is mystery, this articulation is free from contradiction and is to be the basis of orthodoxy concerning the Person of the Incarnate Word.

E. The Reason for this study of the Incarnation

1. It is necessary for a coherent apologetic of Christianity.
 - a. Many reject Christianity because the Incarnation seems incoherent.
 - b. Muslims object that it is hopelessly self-contradictory. Secularist pick up on this argument also.
 - c. We must be able to articulate a possible model that asserts what the Bible teaches while avoiding logical incoherency.
2. It is necessary for the personal growth and confidence of the Christian.
 - a. Belief in the philosophical explanations of the Incarnation are not necessary for salvation. Only belief in the Scriptural statements (Christ is truly God and truly man).
 - b. But a study of the nuances of the Incarnation *may be necessary* for some in order to weather the attacks on their faith posed by those who deny the possibility of the Incarnation.
 - i. Many people have been deceived by false doctrines of this world and have lost their faith because of them.
 - ii. Some people are not prepared to defend the truth, or their own faith in Christianity, because they haven't thought through these kinds of studies.

F. **Kenosis Christology** of the 18th century

1. From the Greek work "kenosis" found in **Philippians 2:6-7**, "*he emptied himself.*"
 - a. This theory asserts that Jesus *forfeited* some of his divine attributes when he became man.
 - b. This seems to imply that God "turned himself into a man" thus ceasing to be God.
 - i. Ancient Greek mythologies have Zeus turning himself into a swan or changing into a bull.
 - ii. But the biblical incarnation is not like that. It's not asserted that Christ was first God and then man. Instead the biblical doctrine is that Christ is the God-man. *A simultaneous embodiment of both humanity and divinity.*
2. The real issue is the nature of deity.
 - a. What properties can God "give up" and still be God? Which properties are essential to deity?
 - b. Some properties of deity:
 - i. Omniscience, omnipresence, aseity, infinity, necessity, omnipotence...
 - ii. These are *de facto* properties of God that cannot be truncated or forfeited.
 - c. None of these attributes be eradicated and it still be a description of deity.
 - i. God cannot cease to be God.
 - ii. It is asserted of Jesus Christ that he is changeless (**Heb. 13:8** – this must be said with respect to the divine nature he possesses even in the Incarnation).

G. A possible model of Christology (What does it mean to call him "LORD"?)

1. **Plank 1 – Affirm Two Natures in One Person** (as asserted at Chalcedon)
 - a. The concept further explained
 - i. Every human is a "rational animal" by nature.
 - To be human is to have an animated physical body plus a capacity of soul that separates and elevates us above the merely animal world.
 - Capacities for morality, self-consciousness, self-reflection, moral volition, etc.
 - We're calling this a "rational soul."
 - ii. So we assert that in Christ's two natures he has all the properties that make up humanity **and** all the properties that make up divinity. *Consubstantial* to both divinity and humanity.
 - He is a person that belongs to two "kinds."
 - We belong to only one "kind." This makes him a sort of "third kind" – the only unique "God-man" (**cf. John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:6**).
 - iii. The Logos possesses the divine nature *essentially*, but the human nature only *contingently* – i.e., contingent on his being joined to a human body.

- In the incarnation the Logos took upon himself a human nature. It was an addition of human nature to the divine, rather than an addition of divine nature to the human.
 - The Logos was always divine, but his human nature had a beginning at the conception in Mary's womb.
- b. This rejects any form of Kenoticism that says that Christ divested himself of any attribute essential to divinity

2. **Plank 2 – The Logos was the Rational Soul of Jesus** (as asserted by Apollinarius)

- a. This theory was condemned because it seemed to imply only a single nature that was a truncation of both the human and the divine. A mixing of two incomplete natures into a single human-divine nature.
- b. But it seems this assertion can be explained in a way that keeps the human and divine natures separate and complete *in one person*.
- i. Apollinarianism implied that when the Logos replaced the rational mind of Jesus that Jesus, therefore, didn't have a *human* mind, but only a divine mind.
 - ii. But what if the Logos (the second person of the Trinity) already possessed the attributes necessary that are essential to producing *humanity* when unified with a human body?
 - Man's immaterial soul is created in the image of God such that when joined to a human body constitutes a single human person.
 - Perhaps one element of "God's image" in which we were created was first present in the Logos that included the properties that when joined with a human body, then a rational animal (a single human person) would result.
 - God is personal, he already has, and is the archetype for, the properties that go to make up a human person.
 - Thus, in the beginning, God created man such that he himself could one day become one!
- c. Apollinarius' tri-partite model of man can be envisioned as the Logos functioning as both the soul (psyche) and the mind (nous).
- i. At the point of the conception in Mary's womb *the Logos became a human soul* by virtue of his joining to human flesh.
 - ii. Further, as a human soul the Logos necessarily retains his divine nature resulting in both natures, though separate, remaining fully intact.
 - iii. So we can say of Christ, that he was *truly* human but not *merely* human—he was also truly divine. (The doctrine of **the person of Christ** is preserved.)
 - iv. This also implies that in the work of redemption, his atonement was sufficient for the saving of all of the human nature. (The doctrine of the **work of Christ** is preserved.)

3. **Plank 3 – The Divine Aspects of Jesus were largely Subconscious/Subliminal**

- a. In order to better understand, for example, how Jesus could be omniscient yet not knowledgeable of all facts can be explained by appealing to the function of human sub-consciousness.
- i. As a human, he was only aware of conscious facts though his subconscious mind was population with omniscience. And whatever knowledge was retrieved from this infinite storehouse and brought to the conscious mind would have been under the authority of the Father (**John 12:49-50**).
 - ii. Since Jesus only spoke those things that were given to him by his Father in heaven we might glean insight into how he could at one time be able to see what no mere human could see (the hearts of men, **John 2:24-25**), and at other times not know the answer to certain questions (**Mt. 24:36**). Jesus had to depend on the Father to will his knowledge of certain facts.

- iii. So in virtue of his humanity, it was *necessary* that Jesus learn facts and grow in wisdom like any other human being in order to mature as a man (**Lk. 2:40, 51-52**). But as his Father willed, he could become aware of any piece of knowledge that would equip him to fulfill his Father's will and the work he came to accomplish. This required Jesus to exercise complete faith in the Father for his knowledge, message, wisdom, and strength.
- b. The science of psychology is aware of the existence of the "subliminal self" that is a realm of the subconscious in the human personality.
 - i. An interesting example of a facet of this subliminal/subconscious self is seen from hypnosis.
 - A person who is under hypnosis can be instructed to be informed of certain facts and then to forget about them when he is awakened from the trance, so that he knows them and yet he doesn't know them!
 - A hypnotist might instruct a subject that after waking from the trance he will return to his seat and continue watching the show. But he is instructed to forget that he has been told that in the course of the rest of the show, when he sees the hypnotist touch his tie (for example) he will feel the seat give him an uncomfortable shock. His mind will generate the sensation of being shocked but there is no real voltage in the seat. Now the interesting aspect for our consideration is that he will not understand why this happened because he was not consciously aware of the suggestion that was made. *He both knew the suggestion and didn't know it simultaneously*. That is, he was not aware of this information *consciously*, but aware of it only *subconsciously*.
 - Further, it is possible for a hypnotic subject to be made to see and not see the same object at the same time. For example, he may be told not to see a lamp-post, whereupon he becomes quite unable to consciously see it consciously. Nevertheless, he does see it subconsciously because he avoids it when walking toward it.
 - Leaving the analogy from hypnotism, there are a myriad of facts that you know subconsciously right now but are not conscious of them until something brings them to mind. Our memories are stored in the subconscious mind but can be retrieved by the conscious mind. The distinction for our discussion is that God is always consciously aware of all facts at all times. But in Jesus' humanity this reservoir of facts, while not absent, was largely subconscious.
 - ii. So this model of personality can be applied to the incarnation in that though Jesus was not conscious of every knowable fact in his ministry, every knowable fact was present in his subconscious and could be brought to the consciousness if and when the Father willed it.
- c. This model for the incarnation appears to be in harmony with the biblical data that portray our Lord as the human being who possessed both a truly human and a truly divine nature.
 - i. **This makes sense of his conscious experience** of having to grow in wisdom and knowledge. And that we shouldn't think of the infant Christ as having conscious knowledge of all facts while lying in the manger.
 - ii. **This makes sense of his ignorance of certain facts** even though he was kept from error by the subliminal and occasionally would be informed by the subliminal about certain supernatural facts.
 - iii. **This makes sense of Jesus' struggles and prayer life.** He can genuinely be tempted (even though God cannot be tempted by evil, because the divine nature was sufficiently subconscious that he was forced to depend on prayer, fasting, and other spiritual disciplines to increase his moral resoluteness and draw closer to God in worship (all *conscious* aspects of the spiritual life).

II. The Work of Christ – His Death and Atonement (how we are made “at one” with God)

A. Scriptural Data

1. Jesus’ own teachings
 - a. Ransom (Mk. 10:45)
 - b. Blood Offering as Inauguration of a (New) Covenant (Mt. 26:26-28)
 - c. Integral to the Office of Messiah (Lk. 24:25-27)
2. Paul’s teaching (two formulas dominate)
 - a. “given up/gave himself up” (Rom. 4:25, passive voice; Eph. 5:2, active voice cf. 1 Pet. 2:25!)
 - b. “died”
 - i. “for *our sins*” (**Gal. 1:3-4**; 1 Cor. 15:3)
 - ii. “for *me/us*” (**Gal. 2:20**; Rom. 5:6-8; 8:32; 1 Cor. 8:11; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; et. al.)
3. Jesus’ death as a **Sacrifice**
 - a. John, the baptizer (Jn. 1:29)
 - b. Paul (1 Cor. 5:7)
 - c. Book of Hebrews (9-10)
 - d. Peter (1 Peter 2:24; quoting Isa. 53)
4. Jesus’ death as a **Propitiation**
 - a. **Rom. 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10; Heb. 2:17** (cf. Heb. 9:5).
 - b. God’s wrath is kindled against sin because his perfect justice demands punishment (Rom. 1:18; Eph. 2:1-3). But Christ’s atonement work *satisfies* God’s justice and *appeases* his wrath so God can maintain his justice, yet offer forgiveness to sinful men (Rom. 5:8-9).
 - c. Jesus accursed for us (Gal. 3:13)

B. From Biblical Data to Atonement Theology

1. The Bible gives the raw data of the death of Christ on the cross. Further, it uses various forms and figures of speech to portray the theological significance of what transpired there. However, there are no specific creedal statements recorded in the Bible that attempt to envision the full significance of the transaction at the cross.
2. Throughout church history various theologians have articulated specific theories on the atonement. We will survey and assess these formulations before we draw some conclusion that will be both faith strengthening as well as evangelistically helpful.

C. Historical Theories of the Atonement

1. *Christus Victor / Ransom Theory* (Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine of the early centuries)
 - a. **Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:5-6** – Man, by reason of his fall into sin, was in bondage to Satan. He had now become enslaved to Satan. Christ, in order to rescue man from this fallen sinful condition, became incarnate. As a man he was offered as a ransom – he offered his life as a ransom – to *buy back* man.
 - b. But – here’s the trick – Satan had no rights over Christ. Christ, being sinless, could not be held in bondage by Satan, and so God won the victory over Satan.
 - i. Satan took Christ as the ransom payment, freeing his captives, but then Christ himself could not be held by the law of sin and death (**Acts 2:24**).
 - ii. God raised Christ from the dead, thereby breaking the bonds of death, hell, and sin and “tricking” Satan. By this transaction, Satan’s power was broken by the power of Christ’s resurrection from the dead (**Heb. 2:14-15; cf. Mt. 12:29**).
 - c. Questions:
 - i. Why would Satan give up the myriads of souls he “owned” for a the single soul of Christ?
 - ii. Wouldn’t Satan would be smart enough not to fall for the “trick” of being defeated by Jesus, whom he knew was divine and sinless? Does 1 Corinthians 2:8 relate?

2. Satisfaction Theory (Anselm of Canterbury in the Middle Ages)
 - a. We must “pay back” what we owe to God for sinning against his glory and incurring debt.
 - i. God, as the greatest being, deserves glory and honor, worship and majesty (**Ps. 8**).
 - ii. When we sin we dishonor all that belongs to him (**Rom. 3:23**).
 - iii. So man has rendered an infinite offense to God’s majesty and honor.
 - iv. This requires an infinite compensation, or satisfaction.
 - b. “Satisfaction” refers to what one owes (in Roman Law) when he has failed to render what he owes to another party. Tertullian introduced this term, *satisfactio*, into Christian theology.
 - i. [This was sometimes paid in what the church called the sacrament of “penance.”
 - ii. This refers to a reparation of sins that was committed after baptism.
 - Confession (including contrition)
 - Penance (rendering satisfaction in proportion to the sins you’ve committed)
 1. This eventually led to the error of the “treasury of merits,” and further to the error that the “saints” of the church might accrue merit.
 2. And then to the abuse of passing these on to others in exchange for some gift or donation to the church. The selling of these kinds of indulgences is what Martin Luther later protested.]
 - c. In sinning against God, man has accrued an infinite debt.
 - i. Man can confess.
 - ii. But man cannot render satisfaction of such a debt (**cf. Mic. 6:6-8**).
 - iii. So God either must infinitely punish man or offer the satisfaction on man’s behalf.
 - iv. This he has done in Christ who becomes flesh.
 - Christ lives perfectly, so it’s not for his own misdeeds that he goes to the cross.
 - In dying perfectly, he offers himself to God as a satisfaction for us.
 - Christ’s perfections in honoring and glorifying God are imputed to us and the merits of his death accrues to our benefit (**Rom. 4:5-8, 22-25 → 3:23-25**).
 3. Penal Substitution Theory (Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, of the 16th century Reformation)
 - a. Christ on the cross was our substitutionary punishment – Christ bore the punishment for sin that man deserved. Our sin was laid on him (**Isa. 53:4-6, 11; 1 Pet. 2:24**).
 - i. This then means that the demands of God’s justice are satisfied in Christ’s suffering as a sacrificial offering to God.
 - ii. Christ’s death was vicarious in that he served as our substitute (“for our sins”).
 - b. The emphasis is not on his substitutionary *merit* that he brought to God on behalf of those who believed in him (the Satisfaction Theory), but rather on the demands of God’s justice that he bore in our place.
 - i. In bearing the punishment for sin his righteousness can be imputed to human beings and they could be constituted right before God.
 - ii. This is a legal transaction that takes place in the mind of God as he is able to “blot out” our record of wrongs. He is both an expiation (removes our sin) and a propitiation (reconciles us to God).
- D. The Multi-faceted Atonement Work of Christ
1. Clearly, each of these theories have elements to be commended. But none fully reveal the robust doctrine of the atonement laid out by Scripture.
 2. In order to better appreciate all that is implied by the biblical doctrine of the atonement, the elements from each of these historically articulated theories can combine to give us a fuller view of the multi-faceted theological diamond that is the atoning work of Christ.

III. The Work of Christ – Our Message and Mission

- A. The work of Christ in human redemption is done. But his work continues in our work for him.
 1. The **Book of Luke** records all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach (**cf. Acts 1:1**).
 2. The church, indwelt by his Spirit, continues both to do and to teach where Jesus left off.
 - a. **Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 1:5; 4:10; Rom. 8:17**
 - b. **Matthew 28:18-20**
 3. Another way of putting it, Jesus *continues* “to do and to teach” through his people on earth. This is the message of the Book of Acts (Gk. *praxeis* – what Jesus is doing “by proxy”).
 - a. We are to do the *will of Jesus* (love and serve one another).
 - b. We are to teach the *person and work of Jesus* (incarnation, death, resurrection).
- B. Our message of salvation in Christ is spelt out in the various facets of the atonement.
 1. The **Ransom** focuses on man’s slavery to sin and Satan
 2. The **Satisfaction** focuses on the glory of God (and our failure to give him proper honor)
 3. The **Penal Substitution** focuses on our moral guilt and God’s immutable justice.
 4. A summary of this message and, therefore, a guide for our evangelism is:
 - a. Our sinfulness has placed us under bondage and rendered us hopeless, unable to deliver ourselves.
 - b. But the same God whom we fail to honor has himself borne our punishment, receiving in himself the full justice for sin, and died for us.
 - c. The God whom we dishonored can now offer us forgiveness through his death, and impute to us righteousness through his obedience.
- C. We should seek to keep the person and work of Jesus as the focus of our evangelism efforts.
 1. It’s been my experience that much of our evangelistic efforts have tended to argue more for the uniqueness of the church than for the uniqueness of the Lord.
 - a. We must guard against an unhealthy emphasis on the church that might in some way diminish the glory of the Christ.
 - b. Just as the bride and the groom are not the same thing, so Christ and his church are not the same thing.
 - c. We should strive to maintain *a healthy distinction* between the church and Christ.
 - i. Certainly, there is the most intimate connection between husband and wife.
 - ii. But *each have different roles*, and we should see that these role distinctions remain clear.
 2. Understandably, most of the evangelism materials I have been familiar with were constructed in a specific historical American context and for a specific audience. There were presuppositions regarding those they were trying to convert.
 - a. Historically our society has been far more biblically literate than today.
 - i. The Bible is from God
 - ii. Christ is the Son of God and Savior of the world
 - iii. Christianity is God’s religion
 - b. The biggest problem was the mass of confusion caused by denominational division and the cultural illusion that it was acceptable to God.
 - c. Since the person and work of Jesus was largely accepted, we chose to put special emphasis on the church so as to expose the error of denominationalism.
 - d. **But today culture is vastly different in many ways. Today we are facing and unprecedented level of ignorance in our culture, not only of the Bible, but of Christ himself.**
 3. There are often extremes that people go to...
 - a. A currently popular sentiment is, “*I want to be spiritual, but not religious.*” “*Give me the man, not the message.*” “*Give me Christ, not the church.*” “*Give me spirituality, not religion.*”

- i. This faulty concept denigrates “organized religion,” as if the local church is disposable and unnecessary. We are left assuming that the only necessity is a personal affection for Jesus.
 - ii. Formal religion expressed in communities of faith is disparaged and viewed as an obstacle to real devotion to God.
 - b. **On the other hand**, there can be an over-emphasis on ecclesiastical matters to the exclusion of a full disclosure of the person and work of Jesus (eschatology, patterns of worship, ecclesiastical structures, etc.).
 - i. We can be guilty (perhaps unwittingly) of converting people to the church instead of to Christ.
 - ii. *We mustn't ascribe to the bride what can only be ascribed to the groom.*
4. Genuine conversion to Christ saves the soul, but conversion to the church causes problems.
- a. Weak brethren stumble because of the problems in a local congregation... the church is composed of *fallible* and sometimes *false* brethren! This causes many to lose heart...and fall away from Christ himself! Why?
 - b. Perhaps because they have a faulty understanding of what should be the *real* object of their devotion. Their allegiance is to be to Christ, not the church!
 - i. They hear that the church is perfect. What do we mean? The concept of the church is part of the perfect plan of God for our salvation... but the church itself is composed of imperfect people.
 - ii. The church doesn't save, Christ saves. The church doesn't save, it is composed of those who are being saved.
 - c. If they had a proper understanding of the role of the church they may be better able to assess the emotional disconnect they feel toward difficult brethren and not equate that crushing disappointment with an emotional disconnect with Jesus.
 - i. I'm convinced that if the people are properly converted to Christ, they will be properly devoted to the church of Christ.
 - ii. I often hear heartbroken parents of grown wayward children say, *"I just wish I could get my kids to come to church. When they were growing we had them here every time the doors were open!"*
 - iii. They seem to betray a misunderstanding of the real problem. These souls need to be genuinely converted to the Lord, and their devotion to the church will follow.
- D. The message and mission of the first century Christians is a model for how our emphases will require change as we address new and diverse cultures.
- 1. In the Jewish cultural context the simple confession of Jesus as “Messiah” (“Christ”), or “Son of God” was sufficient to delineate a person as a follower of the truth (**Mt. 16:16-20**).
 - a. The Jewish concept of Messiah was richly (and accurately) informed by Old Testament prophecy and needed only to receive a corrective emphasis on suffering.
 - b. Thus, Jesus helped correct certain misunderstanding or false emphasis concerning the office of Messiah and those who be his followers (**Mt. 16:21-25**).
 - 2. Later, when the gospel went to non-Jewish cultures, the best articulation of Jesus person and work was under the title, “Lord.”
 - a. When one confessed the Lordship of Jesus Christ (and all that such a confession entails) he was constituted a follower and incorporated into the believing community.
 - b. Statements concerning the basic confession of Jesus among Gentiles is found in various contexts (**2 Cor. 4:5; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 12:3; Col. 2:6; cf. Phil. 2:10-11**)
 - 3. Still later, John addresses a new need when gnostic heresy challenges the basic confession of the person and work of Jesus (**1 Jn. 4:2-3; 2 Jn. 7, 10**).
 - 4. If we aspire to follow the pattern of New Testament Christianity we will accept the responsibility to craft our presentation of the gospel to the real needs of the culture we address.

IV. Work of Christ – Introduction to the Resurrection

- A. Man's two greatest enemies are sin and death. Sin brings death (**Rom. 6:23**). These two enemies are brought together in what the Bible calls the law of sin and death (**cf. Gen. 2:15-17**). This law says that the result of sin against God is separation from him. The law of sin and death is man's greatest enemy.
 1. Christ is the answer to man's greatest enemy—*"the law of sin and death"* (**Rom. 8:2-3**).
 - a. Christ defeated **sin** in the atonement.
 - b. Christ defeated **death** in the resurrection.
 2. The atonement and resurrection are two-sides of the same coin. One supposes the other.
 - a. If Jesus defeated sin then death cannot hold him (**Acts 2:24; Heb. 7:16, 23-24**).
 - b. If Jesus was raised from the dead, this proves he is victorious over sin (**1 Cor. 15:55-58**).
 3. The bodily *resurrection* of Jesus as taught by the Bible is as foundational to our salvation as the *death* of Jesus on the cross. It is a central tenet of the Christian religion.
 4. Yet, it may be surprising to learn that not all professing Christians are inclined to believe what the Bible says about Jesus' resurrection.
 - a. Because of cultural or tradition predispositions we may have been taught, or lead to think of the idea, that Jesus wasn't *physically* raised, but perhaps "spiritually," or "sentimentally." (**Cf. 2 Tim. 2:17-19**)
 - i. *"...current Christian ideas of immortality bear closer resemblance to Platonism than to the biblical doctrine of resurrection. In biblical thought the body—whether it be the natural body in the present life or the spiritual body of the Resurrection life—is more essential to wholeness of being than is often realized."*
 - ii. F.F. Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, p. 244
 - b. *"You ask me how I know he lives, he lives within my heart."*
 - c. Perhaps too many brothers and sisters haven't thought of the resurrection clearly enough.
- B. Our discussion of the resurrection will follow this outline:
 1. The **Nature** of the Resurrection. Jesus' physical resurrection and ours.
 2. The **Defense** of the Resurrection against a skeptical, naturalistic culture.
 3. The **Theology** of the Resurrection. What it means in our daily lives.
 - a. Many of these considerations may seem unimportant to you who believe already. You believe it because the Bible says it. Great.
 - b. But it's good to consider them for the sake of being aware of other ways of thinking that you will meet.
 4. Keep in mind that the Resurrection of Jesus is the touchstone of the entire Christian system.
 - a. If Jesus indeed rose from the dead in a state of immortality then everything He said and stood for is vindicated and no one has any excuse for rejecting his truth.
 - b. This fact has not been lost on thinkers throughout history. Thus, many and varied attempts have been made to "explain" the Christian doctrine of the resurrection in ways that ultimately free humanity from belief in a literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus and therefore appear to give people intellectual justification for rejecting Christ and his truth.

V. The Nature of the Resurrection

A. Scriptural Data

1. **1 Cor. 15:35-58** – the most thorough passage on the resurrection body speaks of the fundamental differences between the spiritual body of the resurrection and the earthly body of this life. But emphasis is given to the fact that the resurrection body is not a non-physical, incorporeal body but instead is ***the result of a transformation of this earthly body***, just as a seed is transformed into a fruit-bearing plant.
2. **Luke 24:15-36** – Jesus' resurrection body was clearly unique in interesting ways.
 - a. His appearance could be altered so as to not be recognized by those who knew him. [The addition to Mark says "he appeared in another form" to these two disciples described here by Luke (Mark 16:12). This at least shows that the earliest traditions noticed the unique ability of the resurrection body to appear differently on occasion.]
 - b. He could "appear" in the midst of a room without using the door for entrance, and he could just as readily "vanish" from sight.
3. **Luke 24:36-43** – Yet, that body was clearly connected with the same body that was crucified and buried.
 - a. He could be seen with human eyes AND handled with human hands.
 - b. He consisted of "flesh and bones" which is evidently of the same "substance" as earthly bodies.
 - c. He could consume real food.
4. **Phil. 3:20-21** – We will experience the same transformation in our resurrection at the end. Jesus serves as the "first-fruits" of this phenomenon (1 Cor. 15:20-22).

B. *The Lost Tomb of Jesus* is a 2008 *Discovery Channel* documentary produced and directed by James Cameron (noted director of *Titanic*). The not-so-subtle assertion was that a first-century ossuary (bone-box) housing the bones of a "*Jesus, Son of Mary, Brother of James*" was conceivably the bones of Jesus of Nazareth, the founder of the Christian religion.

1. This piece of propaganda attempts to cast doubt in the minds of professing Christians about the reliability of their faith.
2. Besides the fact that all or most of the original assertions of the film have been rejected on reasonable grounds by competent scholarship (the ubiquitous use of the names in the inscription, the unlikelihood of a poor Galilean family owning a family tomb in Jerusalem, the questions surrounding the provenance of the ossuary itself, etc.), ***if the bones of Jesus Christ have been recently discovered in a Middle Eastern ossuary then our faith is vain, we are still in our sins, we have no hope in Christ, and we are most pitiful people! (1 Cor. 15:12-19; cf. Luke 24:39!!).***

VI. The Defense of the Resurrection

A. Christianity is a faith that is based on the historical claims of the prophetic predictions of the coming and work of Jesus Christ.

1. His birth, life, death and resurrection are attested today by means of 27 documents from the first century. These documents were written by men who show no signs of dementia, mental illness, or any moral deficiency that would lead historians to presumptively doubt their basic credibility.
2. Regarding the credibility of the resurrection, historians have come to accept the three following assertions.
 - a. The Claim of Postmortem Appearances
 - b. The Empty Tomb
 - c. The Origin of the Disciples' Faith
 - i. [see Gary Habermas, "The Resurrection Argument that Changed a Generation of Scholars" that uses what he calls "The Minimal Facts Method." This allows the skeptical assumptions that the N.T. documents are neither "inspired" nor "reliable" but shows that using baseline

historicity these documents still imply the conclusion that Jesus was raised from the dead. Using Pauline books that are well received using critical methods (Rom., 1&2 Cor., Gal., Phil., 1 Thess., Philemon), we can arrive at the resurrection of Jesus.

ii. Link: https://youtu.be/ay_Db4RwZ_M

3. The question we ask is, “What best accounts for these historical facts?”

B. Three historical facts uncontested by the vast majority of New Testament historians today.

1. The N.T. claim of **Postmortem Appearances** of Jesus Alive from the Dead

a. **1 Corinthians 15:1-11** – quoting from an old Christian tradition. “*I delivered what I also received...*” Historical scholarship accepts that the early disciples indeed claimed to have seen Jesus alive after his death. This appearance “narrative” was a **codified tradition** that dates back to the time immediately following the crucifixion.

i. **Creedal material?**

- Scholars agree that this is a “creedal formula” that echoes the Rabbinic language of verbal tradition (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23). “I delivered what I also received” is a technical phrase pointing to “official” oral tradition that served as a summary of early apostolic message.
- “It is the equivalent terms in Aramaic employed by Paul that are technical words indicating the teaching of tradition. Paul uses this structure again in 1 Corinthians 11 concerning the Lord’s Supper: ‘delivered and received’ (1 Cor. 11:23). This all makes good sense. After all, this is how Pharisees taught and Paul was a Pharisee (Phil. 3:4-6). So these are some pretty crucial signs that this material is not Paul’s” (Habermas, *Evidence for the Historical Jesus*, p. 19).
- It was “of first importance.” This is the very core of Christian truth and essential doctrine of church membership and eternal salvation (“in which you stand...”)
- The text of the “creed” itself is highly stylized. This is not Paul’s own syntax and formulation. Jewish New Testament scholar Pinchas Lapide has listed at least eight indications that Paul is passing on tradition here. ...he notes what’s termed the “triple *hoti* clause.” English students will recognize that as: “and that ... and that ... and that...” Paul doesn’t come up for air until he gets this long sentence out: “... he died for our sins according to the scriptures *and that* he was buried *and that* he was raised *and that* he appeared.” Dr. Lapide tells us that this sequence is a sign of Hebrew narration (Gary Habermas, *Evidence for the Historical Jesus*, p. 20).

1. [That] Christ died for our sins

a. According to the Scripture

i. [And that] he was buried (proof of death)

2. [And that] He rose again the third day

a. According to the Scripture

i. [And that] he was seen (eyewitness as proof of resurrection)

▪ by Cephas

▪ then by “the Twelve”

3. [Paul here leaves the creedal formula and expands the appearance accounts for his own purposes in the context. He explains that Christ appeared to...

a. 3 individuals: Cephas (Peter), James, Paul

b. 3 groups: the twelve, 500 brethren, all the apostles]

• There are a series of non-Pauline words and phrases that Paul never uses elsewhere, such as “on the third day,” “he rose again,” and “the twelve.”

• He uses the Aramaic name, Cephas, evincing verbatim citation.

- Paul appeals to this traditional creedal summary of the apostolic preaching and the witnesses listed in that creed when he says, “*Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed*” (1 Cor. 15:11).
- ii. **Dates?**
 - Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians in A.D. 55
 - He speaks of his message when first with them in A.D. 51-53 (cf. Acts 18:8-18).
 - He received it even earlier (probably Galatians 1:18ff.). This is three years after his conversion which occurred in ca. A.D. 32-33 (thus, A.D. 35-36). So 5-6 years after the events themselves.
 - He received a “tradition” that, by definition, must have been earlier than that. Otherwise, it wouldn’t have been a “tradition” that could not have been “delivered” and conveyed forward as such. The point is that this “tradition” is far, far too early to have been made up by the church of later decades. Instead, it is an accurate account of what the earliest disciples believed and taught.
- iii. **Importance of the mention of Peter and James?**
 - Peter and James are mentioned by name. They are also the only two apostles that Paul spoke to on his initial “fact-finding” mission to Jerusalem 3 years after his conversion (Gal. 1:18ff.)
 - The word in Galatians 1:18 is Gk.: *historeo* found only here in the N.T. and is a technical term for interrogation with an aim at determining historical facts. Paul’s purpose in the visit was to interrogate Peter concerning the historical facts of the faith. This visit is alluded to in Acts 9:26-30.
 - Galatians 2 speaks of an additional visit (14 years later) to re-solidify the unity of the gospel message between Paul and the other apostles (the “pillars” were Peter, James, and John).
- b. **The Gospels** – The appearance traditions in the gospels provide multiple, independent attestation of these appearances.
 - i. This is one of the most important tests of historicity that historians use.
 - ii. If you can show that an event or saying is *multiply* and *independently* attested, then that greatly increases the probability of its historicity because it is unlikely that two independent sources would have simply made up the same event.
 - Appearance to the twelve (1 Cor. 15:5; Lk. 24:36-52; John 20:19-31)
 - Galilean appearances to the disciples (Mk. 16:7; Mt. 28:16-20; John 21)
 - Appearances to the women (Mt. 28:9-10; John 20:14-18)
 - iii. We are not here pointing to the gospels themselves as the independent witnesses, but the sources of these gospels. Clearly there were several different original sources that were variously used by each of the synoptic authors. John would be a separate and additional eye-witness source as well.
 - iv. Craig says, “[We] don’t appeal to simply mentions in different Gospels but rather when the Gospel writers are drawing upon different sources for what they relate. For example, just to give one illustration. Matthew clearly has another source for the empty tomb narrative than Mark. Why? Because Matthew has this whole elaborate story of the guard at the tomb which is not found in Mark. So Matthew is clearly supplementing whatever material he drew from Mark with this other tradition that he has about a guard being posted at the tomb. Luke and John also have this additional element of not only a women’s visit to the tomb, but the visit of two disciples, who are named as Peter and then the Beloved Disciple in John. Again, this is independent of Mark because Mark ends with the women fleeing from the tomb and has nothing about a visit from these male disciples. Clearly, Luke isn’t getting this from Mark. Given the independence of John and Luke’s sources, they are not working with a common source either.”

- a. We can try to explain away the appearance claims, but we cannot successfully deny that the earliest disciples had experiences where they claimed that Jesus physically appeared to them after having died on the cross.

2. The **Empty Tomb**

- a. When you assess the four-fold gospel narratives by the standard criteria that historians use, then it is plausible and firm enough that the tomb had to have been empty.
 - i. All four gospels agree with the following facts:
 - Jesus of Nazareth was crucified in Jerusalem by Roman authority during the Passover Feast, having been arrested and convicted on charges of blasphemy by the Jewish Sanhedrin and then slandered before the governor Pilate on charges of treason.
 - He died within several hours and was buried Friday afternoon by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb, which was shut with a stone.
 - Certain women followers of Jesus, including Mary Magdalene, having observed his interment, visited his tomb early on Sunday morning, only to find it empty.
 - Thereafter, Jesus appeared alive from the dead to the disciples, including Peter, who then became proclaimers of the message of his resurrection.
 - ii. The historical reliability of the *burial account* supports the historicity of the empty tomb:
 - If the burial account is accurate then the site of the burial tomb of Jesus was known by both Jew and Christian alike.
 - Therefore any assertion that Jesus had been raised from the dead could be checked out personally and any hoax would quickly be uncovered.
- b. The pre-Markan passion story is very old and contains the narrative of the “empty tomb.” This is the end of Mark’s passion source (16:1-8) is even older than this *earliest* gospel itself.
 - i. The Passion source that Mark used did not end with defeat and death. It did not end with the burial story – rather, it ended with the empty tomb story.
 - ii. So this “empty tomb” account is not some sort of late-accruing legend that came to pass decades after Jesus was dead and gone. No, this goes back to the very earliest sources in the Jerusalem church.
 - iii. Other signs of early origin:
 - It never refers to the High Priest by name. To speak of the office without special notation of the name implies that the same man is still in that office when the account was written. Caiaphas was still High Priest when the pre-Markan account was written.
 - The historical account names a specific individual Joseph or Arimathea a member of the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus further bolstering the credibility of the earliest account itself (as found in Mark).
 - The pre-Markan account lack the fantastically elaborated elements that characterizes later, legendary compositions (like in the 2nd century Gospel of Peter).
- c. Paul’s testimony supports the fact of the empty tomb.
 - i. **1 Cor. 15:3-5** – “and he was raised” following the phrase “he was buried” implies the empty tomb. The only kind of “resurrection” conceived of by the Jews was a bodily resurrection. Principally the “bones” (cf. Ezek. 37; Gen. 50:25). Thus the ossuary practice of ancient Jewish culture.
 - ii. “on the third day” – points to the day on which the tomb was found empty by the group of Jesus’ women followers.
- d. The tomb was discovered by women. Which, given the social standing of women, would not have been created by fabricators.
 - i. The first century Jewish historian, Josephus says that the testimony of women was regarded so lightly that it couldn’t even be admitted to a Jewish court of law. “Do not admit the testimony of women because of the brashness and levity of their sex.”

- ii. Any later legendary account of the empty tomb would surely have made male disciples, like Peter and John, discover the empty tomb.
 - iii. The fact that women are primary witnesses to the fact of the empty tomb is best explained by the fact that, like it or not, they *were* the discoverers of the empty tomb. The gospel writers simply recorded what, for them, was a rather awkward and embarrassing fact.
 - e. The earliest Jewish polemic pre-supposes the empty tomb.
 - i. The Jewish defense was that the disciples stole away the body from the tomb (Mt. 28:13).
 - ii. This shows that even the enemies of Christianity admits that the tomb was indeed empty!
 - iii. Hostile witness testimony is among the most powerful.
3. The **Origin of the Disciples' Belief** in the Resurrection and the Beginning of the Christian Faith.
- a. Following the crucifixion the disciples were in a shambles.
 - i. The disciples' sense of hopelessness is based on the following:
 - Their leader was clearly dead.
 - He was not killed in some noble battle, but was crucified as a common criminal and heretic on a tree and displayed a one "under the curse of God" (cf. Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).
 - Jewish belief in a resurrection precluded anyone rising to glory and immortality before the general resurrection at the end of the world (cf. Jn. 11:24).
 - ii. Further, it should be remembered that O.T. accounts of Messiah were laden with scenes of glorious triumph and enthronement in Jerusalem. The concept of a crucified Messiah was read back into several passages (e.g., Acts 16; Isa. 53) *following* the historical events and using the new interpretive paradigm given by Jesus himself (Lk. 24:25-27, 44-45).
 - b. Clearly, they sincerely believed that Jesus rose from the dead. *What accounts for this belief?*
 - i. **Ezek. 37; Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2** – The resurrection is certainly an O.T. concept.
 - The Pharisees believed in a resurrection.
 - Jesus sided with them against the Sadducees.
 - ii. But the Jewish conception of resurrection differed in two important ways.
 - Always occurred at the end of time
 - Always involved all people, never a single individual
 - 1. Jesus' resurrection was of a single person,
 - 2. And it was within history as proto-type of general resurrection.
 - iii. The disciples, based on O.T. Scriptures, would have simply preserved his bones in anticipation of the end time resurrection. But they would not have come up with the individual resurrection of Jesus.
- B. The question we ask is simply this: ***"What best accounts for the foregoing accepted facts of history?"***
- C. Historical Survey from the Enlightenment of Various Theories used to explain these historical facts.
- 1. **Conspiracy Theory** (Reimarus, 1694-1768)
 - a. The Disciples stole the body and lied about the resurrection appearances.
 - b. The theory first used in Matthew 28 was revived by 18th century deism... but is no longer seriously held.
 - i. It's physically implausible to suppose that they could overpower the official guards at the tomb, or, if the guards were sleeping, to roll back the stone and steal the body without waking them.
 - ii. It's psychologically implausible that they were able or motivated to organize and promote such a ruse. They were clearly distraught and downtrodden at the crucifixion event.

- iii. It's morally implausible that the disciples should be guilty of such a crime. Though not perfect, they were certainly not imposters and charlatans. They genuinely believed in the resurrection and were willing to uphold that message in the face of suffering and death.
- 2. **Apparent Death Theory** (Paulus, 1761-1851 and Schleiermacher, 1768-1834)
 - a. Jesus didn't really die but eventually recovered and emerged from the tomb.
 - b. 18th century skeptical position. But clearly the Romans were specialists in this kind of torture and well knew if the victim had died. The burial record focuses on Pilate's own care in assuring that Jesus was actually dead before releasing the body for burial (Mk. 15:42-45).
 - c. A half-dead Jesus would not have inspired such a life-giving message of the early church (1 Pet. 1:3).
- 3. **Mythology Theory** (Strauss, 1808-1874)
 - a. 18th-19th centuries scholars looked for parallels to Christian resurrection belief in ancient mythologies as the basis for the disciples' ideas about Jesus' resurrection.
 - i. But the "rising" of mythological figures like Osiris (killed by Typhon, the evil principle), Adonis (the Babylonian, Tammuz) (killed by a boar), etc. are not parallels to the Resurrection of Jesus.
 - ii. They were assertions of either living on in the underworld (Osiris), or symbolic of the crop cycle (dies in the dry season and in the rainy season comes back).
 - b. The Jews looked on these pagan myths as ridiculous and offensive.
- 4. **Subjective Vision Theory**
 - a. Hallucinations were experienced by the disciples who deeply wanted their Master to be alive again. Thus, having had these hallucinations, they mistakenly inferred that he had actually been raised from the dead.
 - b. But the disciples were not disposed to see Jesus' alive.
 - i. Hallucinations are individual events and not a unified experience of a group(s) of people (cf. 1 Cor. 15:5-9).
 - ii. Individuals AND groups of people claimed to see Jesus alive
 - iii. Believers AND unbelievers alike were confronted with these appearances.
- 5. **The Literal Resurrection Theory**
 - a. This is clearly preferable to all of the above theories based on the following tests for determining the best explanations for historical hypotheses.
 - i. Explanatory Scope.
 - ii. Explanatory Power.
 - iii. Plausibility. [This is perfectly plausible when given a supernatural worldview!]
 - b. Perhaps the best explanation of the accepted historical facts is the one given by the witnesses themselves—that God literally and bodily raised Jesus Christ from the dead!

II. The Theology of the Resurrection

A. **1 Corinthians 15** outline:

- 1. **15:1-11** – historical defense of the resurrection (discussed under "Defense of the Resurrection")
- 2. **15:12-19** – if no resurrection, no hope (preaching is vain, still in sins, the dead have perished, etc.)
 - a. because Christ's resurrection vindicates the atonement
 - b. (discussed under "Introduction to the Resurrection")
- 3. **15:20-28** – but there is resurrection, thus we have hope...
 - a. ...in our own future resurrection (**vv. 20-23**).
 - b. ...in the future judgment/vindication at the end of time (**v. 24**, cf. Acts 17:30-31).

- c. ...in the consummation of Christ's working of God's eternal purpose (**vv. 25-26**).
 - i. presently putting all [godless] rule and authority in subjection (remedial judgment)
 - ii. ultimately eradicating all death [separation] of man and nature (cf. Rom. 8:18-24) (forensic judgment)
 - d. ...in the perpetual humanity of Christ, implying the possibility of perpetual sustenance of all humanity in eternity (**vv. 27-28**).
 - i. "all" things will be put under Jesus' feet with one exception—the Father Himself.
 - ii. Thus, Christ will assume a perpetual role of submission to the Father in order to remain in continuity with man making possible our continued existence.
 - iii. The only way we can be sustained unendingly in eternity is if Jesus remains God-man unendingly – that God may be all in all. ["All" here must include *all creation*, and *all mankind*, saved and unsaved.]
 - All mankind is recipient of the second Adam so will be raised (cf. Rom. 5:12-22)
 - But only those are "in Christ" will be sustained in fellowship with God in eternity.
4. **15:29-34** – those "in Christ" are living the resurrected life in the here and now.
- a. The present witness of faithful Christianity is a glimpse of resurrection life (**vv. 29-33**).
 - i. John 5:25 – His resurrection *provides certainty of eternal life now!* The hour is coming *and now is...* when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.
 - ii. Those dead *now* (spiritually) will live *now* (spiritually)... This is the resurrection life that Jesus illustrates at the "resurrection" (lit. "resuscitation") of Lazarus (cf. Jn. 11:24-26).
 - **Romans 8:9-11** – the "What?"
 1. Parallel with Eph. 1:18-20; 3:16-20
 2. We are debtors...
 - **Romans 8:31-39** – the "So What?"
 1. What shall we say to these things?...
 2. What shall separate us from the Love of Christ?... Shall tribulation? Death?
 - iii. Resurrection is the ultimate answer to pain and suffering argument of atheists.
 - We admit the reality (Jesus died and painful, suffering death)
 - But this gives proof that it's never in vain. We live in the already, but not yet!
 - b. So awake to righteousness, and do not sin (**v. 34**).
5. **15:35-57** – nature of the resurrection body (discussed under "Nature of the Resurrection")
- B. **15:58** – conclusion
1. Is this information reliable? Is this information relevant?
 - a. Without the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus, Christianity is vanity.
 - b. If He is alive, then this is the most important truth in the world for you.
 2. If he didn't rise from the dead, nothing matters. If He did, everything matters!
- C. The New Testament sees the resurrection, ascension, and giving of the spirit as a single complex of events. Though they each occurred at intervals the writers of the NT see them as closely integrated theologically. Together they represent the first fruits of the new age (Acts 2:33?)

III. Excursus on Evangelism

A. The early Christian confessional formula

1. **vv. 1-2** – "...by which you are saved..." it pertains to salvation –
 - a. extremely crucial for life and godliness
 - b. must continue in them to stay in the faith... or their belief will have been in vain (**vv. 14ff.**).
2. **v. 3a** – "...of first importance..." it pertains to primary and inflexible doctrines

- a. not L.S., not Instrumental Music
 - b. not end times... etc.
- 3. **v. 3b** – “*I declare (pass on)...what I also received...*”
 - a. What Paul was given as of apostolic authority for the foundation of Christianity
 - b. Rabbinical formulaic terminology. A formula for apostolic verbal traditions (**cf. 11:23**; 1 Tim. 3:16; Phil. 2:6ff.; Col. 1:15ff.)
 - c. Further, this would suggest that this “saying” well pre-dated Paul himself. He probably received it on his fact-finding mission to Jerusalem mentioned in Galatians 1 (ca. A.D. 36). The formula itself had to predate even that year since it was codified and worthy of passing on to Paul.
- 4. **vv. 3c-5** – core of the gospel
 - a. Early church credo (historical facts as basis of Christianity) confession; tradition
 - i. In cadence for memorization
 - [That] Christ died for our sins
 - 1. According to the Scripture
 - a. [And that] he was buried (proof of death)
 - [And that] He rose again the third day
 - 1. According to the Scripture
 - a. [And that] he was seen (eyewitness as proof of resurrection)
 - i. 3 individuals: Cephas (Peter), James, Paul
 - ii. 3 groups: the twelve, 500 brethren, all the apostles
 - b. Three essential facts
 - i. Identity – “Christ/Messiah”
 - Must understand who Jesus really is...
 - Cannot be viewed as part of a list.
 - ii. Death – “died for our sins”
 - iii. Resurrection – “rose again the third day”
 - The cross of Christ is for the forgiveness of our sins (forensic) (**15:16-17**).
 - 1. Eph. 1:7; 2 Cor. 5:21
 - 2. People tend to deny the seriousness of sin...
 - The cross and resurrection achieve victory over sin and death (practical) (**15:18,21-26**).
 - 1. Fear of death holds us in fear/terror... often we deal through denial
 - 2. Heb. 2:14-15 – The cross destroys death
 - The cross brings healing to broken and wounded humanity (universal) (**cf. 15:19, 28**).
 - 1. *Iconically* – Jesus identified with our suffering/pain/sorrow
 - 2. *Intellectually* – the reason he entered this vale was to conquer the decay and corruption (Rev. 21:4)

IV. What should be involved in the confession of faith today?

- A. (See Bruce, *The Spreading Flame*, pp. 240-241) In the earliest days of the church, the gospel went to orthodox Jews and proselytes where the required confession was simply belief in Jesus Christ as Lord, or Son of God.
- B. As the gospel left the territory of Palestine it began to meet with Gentile converts who needed to come to terms with the meaning of monotheism expressed in a Trinitarian formula.
 - 1. Jesus himself prepared for this necessity in the commission to his disciples, “make disciple of the all nation (Gentiles), baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”
 - a. Not only in the name of the Lord Jesus (as per Acts 2:38)

- b. In the earlier centuries converts were often baptized three times following the confession of each member of the Godhead.
 - 2. Paul enjoined the fullest blessing on his Gentile readers in Corinth with the words, “Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Cor. 13:14).
 - C. We have this precedent to assess the major obstacles to the gospel that each successive culture poses, and to ensure that each potential convert is clear on the central tenets of Christianity. Some areas of emphasis demanded by our current culture.
 - 1. His Person – the deity and incarnation of the Second Person of the Godhead.
 - a. John 14:6
 - b. “I am the way” – The Lordship of Christ; commitment to his way as the only way.
 - c. “I am the truth” – The objective nature of the truth. That Christ is the source of absolute truth.
 - d. “I am the life” – That only Christ provides spiritual regeneration and strength to have the abundant life.
 - e. “No one come to the Father but through me” – That Christ is the unique Savior of the world and the only hope of eternal fellowship in the afterlife.
 - 2. His Work
 - a. Death
 - i. Atonement at the cross
 - ii. Meaning of forgiveness
 - b. Resurrection
 - i. The unique vindication of all Jesus claimed
 - ii. The basis of our own future resurrection and judgment
 - c. Exaltation
 - i. Jesus rules over his established kingdom now (the church is the kingdom in practice)
 - ii. The church works until he returns to draw time to a close, judge the living and dead, and usher in eternity

Endnotes:

Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia, lived from 350-428. A friend of John Chrysostom, he was a proponent of the Antiochene school of biblical exegesis, which focused heavily on what might today be called the “grammatical-historical” interpretation of the text.

Theodore was known in his own day for staunchly defending the full humanity of Christ against the Apollinarians and Arians. Following the basic patristic principle that “what is not assumed is not redeemed,” Theodore maintained against the Apollinarians that Christ had a real human soul, not that the Word took the place of the human soul. Only in this manner could the human soul be redeemed.^[1]

A few quotes from Theodore demonstrate his concerns. First, while taking seriously the full humanity of Christ, he sometimes spoke in a way that sounded adoptionist: “He who assumed is God and only-begotten Son; he who is assumed is man.” But elsewhere he made it clear that it was human *nature*, not a second *person*, that the Son took on: “It was our very nature that he assumed, clothed himself with and dwelt in...with it He united Himself.”^[2] It may be from Theodore that Nestorius derived the notion that the joining of the Word with man resulted in a single *prosopon*, or single object of perception who could be addressed as God.

On this point he wrote, “When we distinguish the natures, we assert the integrity of the nature of God the Word and the integrity of its *prosopon*, for a real object (*hypostasis*) without perceptible presentation (*prosopon*) is a contradiction in terms; we also assert the integrity of the nature of the man, and its *prosopon* likewise. But when we regard their combination, then we assert a single *prosopon*.” Similarly: “we preach that the *prosopon* constituted by both the natures is single, the manhood receiving through the godhead the honor rendered by the created world, and the godhead accomplishing all appropriate action in the manhood.”^[3]

Davis observes that Theodore at times seemed to distinguish the two natures the way that the Council of Chalcedon would.^[4] Yet, his Christology often sounded like adoptionism, as when “he represents the man Jesus as thanking the Father for counting him worthy of adoption, or discoursing with the Word as if they were separate Persons.”^[5]

Although considered orthodox in his own day, at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, Constantinople II (553), Theodore was roundly condemned as a heretic on the grounds of selections from his writings “deliberately compiled in order to discredit him.”^[6] Since the rediscovery in Modern times of his *Catechetical Homilies*, the past judgment of Theodore as a “Nestorian before Nestorius” has been somewhat mollified. He is now generally represented “as a theologian who championed the reality of the Lord’s manhood against Apollinarianism and strove to do justice to His human experiences.” Indeed, “he was only a Nestorian in the sense that there were certain tendencies in his Christological thinking which, harmless enough in themselves and in their context, lent themselves to dangerous exploitation at the hands of his less cautious disciples.”^[7]

As Kelly explains the flaws with Theodore’s views, “What was lacking to his thought, as to Antiochene theology generally at this time, was a clearly worked out metaphysic of personality; in particular, the difference between ‘nature’ and ‘Person’ had not been properly appreciated.”^[8] Given that the Alexandrian school had not itself been able to provide answers to the same questions, it would be unfair to judge Theodore a heretic on the basis of characteristically Antiochene conceptual difficulties. Nevertheless, his views were such that one has called him “the godfather of Nestorianism.”^[9] His works were condemned at the Fifth Ecumenical Council, Constantinople II, in the year of grace 553.

From Phil Sanders *Course Packet: Scheme of Redemption*

Sacrifice and Atonement

The word “atone” means to make amends, to make matters right, to bring satisfaction to a wronged or offended persona, with the result that the estranged people are then “at one.” Moses tried to reconcile at peace two fighting men, to them “at one” (Acts 7:26). Paul urged Euodia and Syntyche to live in harmony (Phil. 4:2). The word “atonement” is literally “at-one-ment,” and so it means agreement, concord, or reconciliation.¹

The Hebrew term translated “atonement” literally means a covering. It describes the pitch, which Noah put on the ark. It describes Jacob’s gift to pacify Esau: “I will appease him [cover his face] with the present that goes before me” (Gen. 32:20). Then the word came to mean a covering for sin, satisfaction, propitiation, and atonement.

The Relationship of Sin to the Atonement

Sin is an offense to God and causes men to be guilty before Him. Since God cannot tolerate sin (Deut. 32:1-4; Hab. 1:13; John 8:21), He had to expel Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Alienation between God and man is the result of sin (Isa. 59:1-2). Since sin cannot enter heaven (John 8:21, 24; Rev. 21:8, 27), the most critical need of the universe was a reconciliation, a satisfaction, an atonement by which sinners may be restored to God’s favor now and ultimately to His presence.

The Relationship of the Extent of Sin to the Atonement

It was not only Adam and Eve who sinned against God. All people with the right use of their minds growing to know right from wrong have themselves sinned (Rom. 3:23). “All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17). Only Jesus could meet the challenge: “Who of you convicts me of sin?” (John 8:46). Solomon asks: “Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Prov. 20:9). The universality of sin shows therefore that the doctrine of a limited atonement falls short. Only a universal atonement can be effective against the face of universal sin. Since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), and since He loves all men, His plan of atonement for sin must include all.

The Relationship of the Personal Nature of Sin to the Atonement

Sin is not inherited (Ezekiel 18:1-4), nor is it transferable. Rather, every sinner has been “drawn away by his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:14). This being true, then no matter how broad is the atonement, it can only be applied as each individual responds personally to the provisions of the atonement. If we sin individually, we must have our individual sins atoned. If sin is personal, then the reconciliation must also be personal. The atonement then is futile without personal response. “So then each one of us shall give account of Himself to God” (Rom. 14:12).

Heaven’s Problem and It’s Solution

The Problem:

The wages of sin is death and banishment from God (Rom. 6:23; Isa. 59:1-2). The Lord could not be a faithful and righteous being (Deut. 32:1-4) if He overlooked man’s iniquity and took Him to heaven regardless. Yet the Lord loved man, and yearned for his salvation (Ezek. 33:11; John 3:16). How could God remain just and at the same time justify sinners? This was heaven’s problem.

Keeping Patriarchal and Mosaic Laws Insufficient

¹ This lesson is adapted from a lecture by Hugo McCord, “Atonement” in *Fifty Years of Lectures*, Vol. 1, 191-97.

God's laws ordering animal sacrifice and prohibiting shedding human blood or eating any blood were essential to keep the patriarchs on the road to heaven; but if such observances could have atoned for sin, Heaven's problem would have been solved.

Cursed was anyone who despised Moses' law (Deut. 27:26; Heb. 10:26-27) and who failed to keep it; but even those who observed it blamelessly (Luke 1:6; Phil. 3:6) still had sins marked against them. It was not possible for the blood of animals to take away sin (Heb. 10:4). "For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law" (Gal. 3:21).

Believing and Obeying God and Christ Insufficient

A great act of faith is exemplified in the 85-year-old Abram when he believed that Jehovah would make his seed as numerous as the stars (Gen. 15:6). This act of faith in Abram is praised and set forth as an example to us in the New Testament (Rom. 4:16-24; Gal. 3:16-29). But if the work (cf. John 6:29) of believing and obeying were sufficient in and of themselves to atone for sin, Heaven's problem would have been solved.

The obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5), a faith which works by love (Gal. 5:6), are essential for anybody's going to heaven (Rev. 2:10), but actually nothing that any human can do will make him righteous. As important as is strict obedience to God's word, human obedience is not by itself the solution to Heaven's problem.

Performing Good Deeds Insufficient

As precious and as necessary in God's eyes (Matt. 25:31-46) as are good deeds, they cannot atone for man's sins. Obedience will not offset disobedience. An adulteress is still in her guilt though she is a kind and good neighbor to those in need. A thief is still guilty though he gives money to the poor. The man who prayed much to make up for his much cursing went unheard by God (James 1:26). Salvation by the debit and credit method is not the solution to Heaven's and the world's greatest problem.

Transferring Righteousness Impossible

Some have supposed that the solution God worked for man's hopeless, condemned condition was a transfer of Christ's righteousness to human beings. If this were possible then Christ need never have left heaven, for He was righteous before He came to earth. Though Christ is our source of righteousness (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30), and though we are made righteous in Him (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24), there is no transfer of a state of rightness from one person to another. We cannot be declared righteous without Christ's atonement, but neither scripture nor reason suggests that Jesus' state of being righteous has been applied to us.

Righteousness, the quality of being right, is a condition that exists by God's declaration of the fact, not by imputing somebody else's condition on the sinner. If a transfer of righteousness from one person to another were conceivable, surely God would have thought of it in order to spare His Son. Just as Adam's sin was not transferable, so Christ's righteousness was not portable. Something else had to be Heaven's solution.

Sending Christ as a Substitute

When in Heaven's council before the world began (1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8), animal sacrifices in any age were by God declared insufficient, then God's only Son stepped forward and volunteered to become one flesh in order that He might die a sacrificial, substitutionary death (Heb. 10:1-10). "Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, 'Sacrifice and offering thou has not desired, but a body Thou has prepared for me; in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou has taken no pleasure.' Then I said, 'behold, I have come (in the roll of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God'" (Heb. 10:5-7). The Father explained there would be no compulsion; and should Jesus change His mind, He would not have to go through with the horrible ordeal. The Father's promise to his Son was remembered by Jesus when He was on earth (John 10:17, 18).

Jesus was human like the rest of us. One can understand his dread of the cross when he "set his face" steadfastly to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51; 13:33). One can understand his dread when, on Peter's suggestion that he not die and so tempting him to avoid death, Jesus called Peter Satan (Matt. 16:21f.). One can understand his dread of the cross at Gethsemane when his soul became exceedingly sorrowful. He prayed, "Father, save me from this hour," but then he caught himself and finished by saying, "but for this cause came I

unto this hour” (John 12:27). Jesus could have called twelve legions (72,000) angels (Matt. 26:53), but He did not. Deeply he wanted to avoid the cross’ misery and shame and prayed the Father to find some other way to atone for the sins of the world. There was none. If there had been, the all-wise Father would have found it.

Any other plan would compromise Heaven’s purity and the Father’s standard of justice. The only way God could remain just and yet justify sinners was for him to see the travail of Jesus’ soul with the sins of the world heaped upon him. Only then could the Father feel honorable in releasing sinners from guilt (Rom. 3:23-26; Isa. 53:10-12). On Calvary, mercy and truth met together, while righteousness and peace kissed each other (Psalm 85:10).

King Zaleucus: A Solution

King Zaleucus of Locris, about 500 B.C., had a problem similar to God’s. His law had decreed the loss of eyes for adultery. However, when his own son was guilty, the king was torn between upholding the law and being merciful to his son. He solved this problem by causing one of his son’s eyes to be removed and one of his own. Thus he maintained righteousness of law and at the same time left his son able to see.

Just as King Darius could not deliver Daniel from the lion’s den though he struggled for a whole day to find a way to rescue him, so the Lord found no means to save His Son from the shame and pain of the cross.

Yom Kippur and Crucifixion Day

The most solemn day among the Hebrews was the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur. It was the only fast day prescribed in Moses’ law: “You shall afflict your souls” (Lev. 23:27). It was a Sabbath of Sabbaths, with both work and eating coming to a halt. On that day the high priest sprinkled animals’ blood on, and seven times before, the *kapporeth*, the covering of the Ark of the Covenant housed in the Holy of Holies. In a similar way, Jesus entered into the Holy of Holies, heaven itself, with his own blood, and applied its atoning power to the mercy seat (*hilasterion*), the place of satisfaction (Heb. 9:5). God received Jesus as an atoning sacrifice for sin, which placated or appeased His demand for justice and covered or cancelled the guilt of our sin.

False Theories on the Atonement

The death of Christ is highly significant in Christian doctrine but the understanding of His death has been reflected in widely divergent views. The following are the principal views regarding the death of Christ.

RANSOM TO SATAN THEORY

This theory was developed by Origen (A.D. 185-254), and it advocated that Satan held people captive as a victor in war. This theory, which was also held by Augustine, advocated that because Satan held people captive, a ransom had to be paid, not to God, but to Satan.

In response to this view it should be noted that God’s holiness, not Satan’s, was offended, and payment had to be made to God to avert His wrath. Furthermore, Satan did not have the power to free man, God alone had the power.

This theory is false because it makes Satan the benefactor of Christ’s death. This view has too high a view of Satan; the cross was a judgment of Satan, not a ransom to Satan.

RECAPITULATION THEORY

The recapitulation theory, advanced by Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200?), taught that Christ went through all the phases of Adam’s life and experience, including the experience of sin. In this way, Christ was able to succeed wherein Adam failed.

The element of truth is that Christ is known as the Last Adam ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)), however, Christ had no personal encounter with sin whatsoever ([1 John 3:5](#); [John 8:46](#)). The theory is incomplete in that it neglects the atonement; it is the death of Christ that saves, not His life.

COMMERCIAL THEORY

The commercial theory was set forth by Anselm (A.D. 1033-1109), who taught that through sin, God was robbed of the honor that was due Him. This necessitated a resolution that could be achieved either through punishing sinners or through satisfaction. God chose to resolve the matter through satisfaction by the gift of His Son. Through His death Christ brought honor to God, and received a reward, which He passed on to sinners. The gift was forgiveness for the sinner and eternal life for those who live by the gospel.

Although this view changed the focus from payment to Satan to a proper emphasis on payment to God, there are nonetheless problems with this view. It emphasizes God's mercy at the expense of other attributes of God, namely, justice or holiness. It also neglects the obedience of the life of Christ, and in addition, it ignores the vicarious suffering of Christ. Rather than emphasizing Christ died for the penalty of sin, this view embraces the Roman Catholic concept of penance, "so much satisfaction for so much violation."

MORAL INFLUENCE THEORY

Abelard (A.D. 1079-1142) first advocated this theory that has since been taught by modern liberals such as Horace Bushnell and others of a more "moderate" liberal stance. The moral influence view was originally a reaction to the commercial theory of Anselm. This view taught that the death of Christ was not necessary as an expiation for sin, rather, through the death of Christ, God demonstrated His love for humanity in such a way that sinners' hearts would be softened and brought to repentance.

The weaknesses of the moral influence view are obvious. The basis for the death of Christ is His love rather than His holiness; this view also teaches that somehow the moving of people's emotions will lead them to repentance. Scripture affirms that the death of Christ was substitutionary ([Matt. 20:28](#)), and thereby the sinner is justified before a holy God, not merely influenced by a demonstration of love.

ACCIDENT THEORY

A more recent view, the accident theory, was advocated by Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), who taught that Christ became enamored with His messiahship. This theory saw Him preaching the coming kingdom and being mistakenly crushed in the process. Schweitzer saw no value to others in the death of Christ.

The deficiency of Schweitzer's view centers on the suggestion that Christ's death was a mistake. Scripture does not present it in that way. On numerous occasions Jesus predicted His death ([Matt. 16:21](#); [17:22](#); [20:17-19](#); [26:1-5](#)); Christ's death was in the plan of God ([Acts 2:23](#)). Moreover, His death had infinite value as a substitutionary atonement ([Isa. 53:4-6](#)).

EXAMPLE (MARTYR) THEORY

In reaction to the Reformers the example theory was first advocated by the Socinians in the sixteenth century and more recently by Unitarians. This view, which is a more liberal view than the moral influence view, suggests the death of Christ was unnecessary in atoning for sin; sin did not need to be punished. There was no relationship between the salvation of sinners and Christ's death. Rather, Christ was an example of obedience and it was that example of obedience to the point of death that ought to inspire people to reform and live as Christ lived.

The weaknesses of this view are multiple. Christ is viewed only as a man in this theory; atonement is unnecessary yet Scripture emphasizes the need for atonement ([Rom. 3:24](#)). This view emphasizes Christ as an example for unbelievers, but [1 Peter 2:21](#) teaches that Christ's example was for believers, not unbelievers.

GOVERNMENTAL THEORY

Grotius (1583-1645) taught the governmental theory as a reaction to the example theory of Socinus. The governmental theory served as a compromise between the example theory and the view of the Reformers. Grotius taught that God forgives sinners without requiring an equivalent payment. Grotius reasoned that Christ upheld the principle of government in God's law by making a token payment for sin through His death. God accepted the token payment of Christ, set aside the requirement of the law, and was able to forgive sinners because the principle of His government had been upheld.

Among the problems with this view are the following. God is subject to change—He threatens but does not carry out (and in fact changes) the sentence. According to this view God forgives sin without payment for sin. Scripture, however, teaches the necessity of propitiating God ([Rom. 3:24](#); [1 John 2:2](#))—the wrath of God must be assuaged. Also, substitutionary atonement must be made for sin ([2 Cor. 5:21](#); [1 Peter 2:24](#)).

Theories of the Atonement²

Theory	Original Exponent	Main Idea	Weakness	Recent Exponents
Ransom to Satan	Origen (A.D. 184-254)	Ransom paid to Satan because people held captive by him.	God's holiness offended through sin; cross was judgment on Satan, not ransom to Satan.	No known current advocates.
Recapitulation	Irenaeus (A.D. 130-200)	Christ experienced all Adam did, including sin.	Contradicts Christ's sinlessness. (1 John 3:5)	None known.
Commercial (Satisfaction)	Anselm (1033-1109)	Sin robbed God of honor; Christ's death honored God enabling Him to forgive sinners.	Elevates God's honor above other attributes; ignores vicarious atonement.	None known.
Moral Influence	Abelard (1079-1142)	Christ's death unnecessary to atone for sin; His death softens sinners hearts to cause them to repent.	Basis of Christ's death is God's love, not holiness. Atonement viewed as unnecessary.	Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, Horace Bushnell
Example	Socinus (1539-1604)	Christ's death unnecessary to atone for sin; His death was example of obedience to inspire reform.	Views Christ only as a man; atonement viewed as unnecessary.	Thomas Altizer, Unitarians
Governmental	Grotius (1583-1645)	Christ upheld government in God's law; His death was token payment; enables God to set law aside and forgive people.	God is subject to change; His law is set aside; God forgives without payment for sin.	Daniel Whitby, Samuel Clarke, Richard Watson, J. McLeod Campbell, H. R. Mackintosh
Accident	A. Schweitzer (1875-1965)	Christ became enamored with a Messiah complex and was mistakenly crushed under it in the process.	Views Christ's death as a mistake; denies substitutionary atonement.	None known.

² Paul Enns, *Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press).

Example of legendary embellishments to the empty tomb story.

Mark's story of the discovery of the empty tomb is remarkably simple, and it lacks any signs of legendary embellishment. You don't have in the Markan account the sort of theological and apologetical motifs that would characterize a later legendary account. It is lacking any sort of theological or apologetical reflection.

The best way to appreciate this is to simply read the Markan account in contrast to the accounts of the resurrection found in the later apocryphal gospels. These were forgeries from the second century and later.

For example, in the so-called **Gospel of Peter**, which is a forgery from the second half of the second century after Christ, the tomb is surrounded by a Roman guard – and it is explicitly identified as Roman! No doubt here now, this is a Roman guard according to the Gospel of Peter. Moreover, the guard is not set on Saturday; it is set on Friday – that ensures that no one could have had any hanky-panky going on Friday night before the tomb was guarded on Saturday as Matthew records. That apologetical gap has been closed now by the Gospel of Peter. The guard is set immediately, and it is a Roman guard. Moreover, the tomb is surrounded by all of the chief priests and the Pharisees, who are watching the tomb, and there is a huge crowd from the surrounding countryside who have all come to watch the tomb. So you have all the official witnesses there, not unqualified women. You have the Jewish leadership watching the tomb.

Now what happens? In the night, a voice rings out from heaven, and the stone over the door of the tomb rolls back by itself. Then two men descend from heaven and go into the tomb. And then a moment later three men come out of the tomb. The heads of the two men reach up to the clouds, but the head of the third man, who is apparently sitting on the shoulders of the other two – he is being supported by the other two, as they bring him out – his head overpasses the clouds! Then a cross comes out of the tomb, and a voice from heaven asks, "Hast thou preached to them that sleep?" and the cross answers, "Yea." See, these are how real legends look! They are filled with all sorts of apologetical and theological motifs that are starkly absent from the Markan account, which is just remarkable in its simplicity. It is a bare-boned account that suggests this is not the product of legend.