



Jesus is our Propitiation

Isaiah 52:13-53:13; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:9-10

Main Idea

Jesus died a brutal death in our place for our sins, satisfying God's holy, just, righteous wrath.

Overview

- **How Did Jesus Die? (Is. 52:13; 53:3, 7, 8)**
 - Before Jesus was crucified he was repeatedly beat until he was unrecognizable
 - He was then led out to be crucified
 - Crucifixion is perhaps the most horrid form of punishment ever invented
 - Without a proper understanding of Jesus' crucifixion we will not have a full appreciation of what Jesus endured
 - Until we fully understand what Jesus endured our motivations to serve him will be fueled by selfish desires rather than worship
- **Why Did Jesus Die? (Is. 53:4-6)**
 - Simply put Jesus died for our sins – that is, in our place for our sins
 - This theme is littered throughout the Bible (Mk. 10:45; Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pt. 3:18, etc.)
 - Theologically this is called 'Penal Substitutionary Atonement'
 - Penal – the penalty for sin is death
 - Substitutionary – Jesus was our substitute
 - Atonement – a payment that reconciles, that brings “at-one-ment”
 - God's holiness demands all sins be punished
 - God is Holy, Holy, Holy; his name is Holy (Is. 6; 57)
 - Saying that God is holy primarily means that he is transcendently separate from all that is sinful
 - Holy is more than must morally perfect; he is above us and beyond us
 - If God did not punish sin he would not be holy because his character would be compromised
 - No one wants a God who does not judge evil and sin
 - We want a God who does not judge *our* evil and sin
 - Because God is holy, man's sin provokes God's wrath – God's wrath must be satisfied
- **Jesus is our Propitiation (1 John 2:1-2; 4:9-10)**
 - The question we must answer is “How does God forgive us our sins and still maintain his holy character?”
 - Jesus is our *righteous* advocate before the Father - What evidence is he presenting before God the Father as to why we should be forgiven?
 - Jesus is our Propitiation

- Propitiation is the act by which someone become propitious, that is, favorable toward another
 - Biblically speaking, propitiation is the sacrificial act by Jesus in which God become favorable toward man
 - On the cross Jesus satisfied, or exhausted the wrath of God
 - God's wrath is just as personal as his love; in fact, God's wrath is a manifestation of his love
 - Because of God's holiness his wrath must be satisfied, because of God's love he entered the world in the person of Jesus to satisfy his wrath.
 - Propitiation is the heart of penal substitutionary atonement
 - Our most fundamental problem is not just that we are alienated from God or guilty before God, but that we are due to receive the wrath of God.
- **Answering the Critics**
- *Is the crucifixion of Jesus cosmic child abuse carried out by an angry Father?*
 - Abuse can be defined as an act in which a person, filled with hate, seeks to bring gratification to himself by inflicting harm against an unwilling victim
 - According to this definition, the crucifixion fails on numerous accounts
 - Jesus was not unwilling (cf. Mark 10:45; John 10:17-18; 19:30)
 - Jesus was not a victim - doctrine of the Trinity shows that Jesus is God
 - God took his own loving initiative to appease his own righteous anger by bearing it his own self in his own Son when he took our place and died for us.
 - The cross was not simply hate-filled vengeance (cf. 1 John 4:9-10)
 - *The Cross is not about Substitution but about Jesus triumphing over Evil*
 - Saying the cross is about victory over evil, focuses on defeating power of sin instead of eradicating the penalty of sin, which is the primary issue
 - This objection does not provide a logical explanation of why Christ had to go to the cross. If God's main objective was to defeat the powers of Satan, certainly He has it within his omnipotence to overthrow the devil without requiring the death of Christ
 - *The Cross is not about Substitution but about Jesus being an Example*
 - If Jesus is only an example, he is a bad example – if there was no penalty to save us from, his voluntary death makes no sense
 - This objection does not explain *why* Jesus had to die

Questions

1. Why do we become desensitized to things, especially sin?
2. How does Isaiah paint the picture of Jesus death? What's the importance remembering just how brutal his death was?
3. Read Isaiah 53:4-6. Why did Jesus die? Are there other places in the Scriptures that make this same argument?
4. Theologically Jesus death is called "Penal Substitutionary Atonement." What do those terms mean?
5. Why is it important that we trust in Jesus as our substitute, not just one who provides victory over evil or merely provides an example?
6. Isaiah 52:13 says that God's servant is "high and lifted up and exalted" referring to God's holiness (cf. Is. 6:1; 57:15). Why can't God simply over look sin and forgive us apart from Jesus' death?
7. Read 1 John 2:1-2; 4:9-10. What does it mean to say Jesus is our propitiation? Why does this stand at the heart and center of the cross?
8. Why should the doctrine of propitiation give us a sense of urgency?
9. Why should the doctrine of propitiation make us forgiving of others?
10. How does the doctrine of propitiation usher us to worship God