



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

I. How Should We View Christ's Death?

- “According to Paul, God is on a mission to liberate humanity—and indeed the entire cosmos—from the powers of Sin and Death...through the...death & resurrection of His Son...” [Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel*, p. 24]
- “In history...Jesus’ death [is]...redemptive...in various ways, each [with] in a key metaphor. [1.] Most commonly it’s...[seen] as a great...sacrifice, [2.] as meeting the requirements of God’s justice, [3.] as the decisive victory over the hostile powers or [4.] as a great act of love which inspires love in others...In [3.—Christ the Victor]...God is engaged in a cosmic battle with the powers of evil & wins a decisive victory over them on the cross...In [1. & 2.] the [emphasis] is on what Jesus has offered to God on behalf of others.” [C. Mostert, “Redemption & Victory,” in K. Eilers (ed.) *Sanctified by Grace*, p. 113]

A. Redemption (Eph. 1:7) – Sacrifice/Penal Substitution

- “I passed on to you as most important...that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15:3)
- “God...condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering.” (Rom. 8:3b)
- “In [Christ] we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses...” (Eph. 1:7)

1. Sacrifice/substitution (1 Cor. 15:3; Rom. 8:3; Jn. 1:29; Lev. 16:21-22)

– Substitution: “Christ’s death [was] in our place, instead of us...Christ did something, underwent something, so we did not—and never will—have to...One can have substitution without that being penal substitution, i.e., without punishment for sins being involved.” For example, non-penal substitution exists in the live scapegoat of Leviticus 16:21, which was sent into the wilderness as

a substitute for the people (but not put to death)...[Israel 's] sins...are borne away in the goat, not punished . [Simon Gathercole, *Defending Substitution*, pp. 15, 18]

– “John sighted Jesus & cried ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’ [Jn. 1:29]... Therefore, now... Jesus, like the scapegoat of Lev. 16:22, has taken away the sin of the world.” [F. I. Ootob, *Power of Res.*, p. 32]

– God “made the one who didn’t know sin to be sin for us, so...we might become the righteousness of God.” (2 Cor 5:21) “Paul had in mind...animal...sacrifices. A more specific allusion to the Day of Atonement’s scapegoat is probable.” [James D.G. Dunn, “Paul’s Understanding of the Death of Jesus,” Robert Banks (ed.) *Reconciliation & Hope*, p. 133]

– “Did you know Jesus was a scapegoat?...He became a scapegoat to save us from the eternal consequences of our sins ...On the cross He carried our sins...[so] we don’t have to pay for our sins.” [Zonderkidz, Lev. 16:9-10, *Jesus Bible*, p.]

2. Penal Substitutionary Atonement (Col. 2:13-15) –Jesus substitutes (punished) for sinners, to satisfy God’s justice

– Note: ‘Atonement’: “This English word expresses the concept of ‘at-one-ment’ (i.e., reconciliation) when the benefit of Christ’s work is applied to one who believes.” [David L. Allen, *The Atonement*, p.]

– “The prevalent view among Protestants in general & evangelicals in particular is called the penal substitutionary view [PSA]” [Gregg Allison, “History of the Doctrine of the Atonement.” *SBJT*, Vol. 11 (2007) p. 4] “The word ‘penal’ is used to express that Christ bore a penalty when He died, while...‘substitutionary’ is used to speak of the exchange of position when Christ died for mankind.” [John M. Brown, “Biblical Understanding of Christ’s Atonement,” (2012)]

– “I define Penal Substitution as...The Father, because of his love for human[s]...sent his Son (who offered himself...gladly) to satisfy God’s justice, so that Christ took the place of sinners. The punishment...we deserved was laid on Jesus Christ instead of us, so...in the cross...God’s holiness & love was manifested.” [T. Schreiner, *Atonement*, p. 67]

3. Penal Substitution matches a Law Court metaphor

– “Penal Substitution [PSA]...assumes the logic of the law court. Sin is understood as law-breaking, & so...attracts a penalty...death. In dying on the cross, Jesus pays the penalty...” [S. Holmes in A. Johnson (ed.), *Atonement*, p. 295]

– This image views “God as judge, humanity in the dock...[In] Penal Substitution [Atonement] Christ bears the legal penalty so...humanity in the dock can be acquitted by God the Judge.” [Ben Pugh, *Pictures of Atonement*, p. 105]

– “Removal of legal barriers...God cannot save people [arbitrarily]...The righteous requirement of the law must be satisfied. In the cross God has taken away that legal necessity...providing a righteous path for forgiveness. He has removed all things on His part [for reconciliation].” [David L. Allen, *Atonement*, p.]

4. Sacrifice vs. Penal Substitution [PSA]

– “There’s a clear sense of the sacrificial animals bearing the [peoples’] sins...in a substitutionary way. But...you cannot easily align sacrifice & law court [PSA]. When an animal is killed sacrificially, it’s...not...clear that it’s...taking the punishment which would otherwise fall on the worshipper...[Plus] we shouldn’t forget...the 2 goats on the Day of Atonement, the one [‘scapegoat’] over whose head confession of sin was made was the one that’s not sacrificed, presumably because it’s thereby unclean.” [N. T. Wright, “Cross &...Caricatures,” *Fulcrum* (Easter, 2007) p.]

B. Jesus' Death/Resurrection produces 'a Vaccine'—a contemporary analogy

- Consider “Vaccination. In vaccination germs are introduced into a healthy body in order that by destroying these germs the body will build up its strength...We might say the ‘germ of sin’ was introduced into Jesus, the only one ‘healthy’/ whole enough to let that sin run its full course. The ‘vaccination’ seemed to fail, because Jesus died. But it did not fail, for he rose again; & his new humanity is ‘germ-resistant,’ sin resistant...He offers to share [this new humanity] with [people].” [J. D.G. Dunn, “Paul’s Understanding of the Death of Jesus,” R. Banks (ed.) Reconciliation & Hope, p. 140]

C. Victory (Col. 2:15; Eph. 1:20-22) – Christ defeats Satan & the evil powers

- At “the cross [God] disarmed the rulers & authorities & disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them” (Col. 2:15)
- “God...in a positive sense, is...engaging in a necessary, mortal & cosmic conflict with an actual enemy [Satan] that had to be forcefully & irrefutably subjugated & defeated...[In the] ‘classic idea of the Atonement’ [Christ the Victor]...God in Christ violently combats and prevails over the ‘tyrants’ which hold mankind in bondage.” [Martyn J. Smith, Divine Violence & Christus Victor, Middlesex University/London School of Theology, p. 186]
- “God irresistibly & violently confronts evil present in the person of the Satan & forcefully & powerfully overcomes him, resulting in the Satan’s defeat & the liberation of humans to whom he had previously laid claim, whether legitimately or not. [In the Christ the Victor view,] humanity is not so much ‘bad’ as ‘captive,’ not so much perpetrator as victim. Humanity is thus less in need of punishment than of liberation or salvation. Humanity is not saved from God’s wrath, but from Satan’s hold on it.” [Martyn J. Smith, Divine Violence & Christus Victor..., Middlesex University, p. 190]

D. Is Christ Redeemer or Victor?

- “Many of the early church fathers...assume two things...[1.] The idea that on the cross God in Christ won a great victory ...the great victory, over the powers of evil. This is...Christ the Victor, the conquering Messiah. [2.] On the other hand, many early theologians... spoke of Jesus’ death as somehow, ‘in our place:’ [substitutionary] he died, therefore we do not...coupled with the...use of sacrificial imagery.” [N. T. Wright, Day the Revolution Began...Jesus’ Crucifixion, p.]

E. Paul emphasizes both (Col. 2:13-15, 20)

- “You...were dead in your trespasses...God made [you] alive together with [Christ], having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers & authorities & put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in [Christ].” (Col. 2:13-15 ESV)
- “There are many metaphors for atonement, each one useful & true.” [SR Holmes in AJ Johnson (ed.) Atonement, p. 312]

II. The Narrative Arc of Scripture Emphasizes God’s Mission & Warfare

A. The narrative arc of Scripture (Gen. 3:15; Rev. 12:11)

- God told the serpent: “I will put hostility between you & the woman, & between your offspring & her offspring. He will strike your head, & you will strike his heel.” (Gen. 3:15)
- “They [brothers & sisters] conquered him [the ancient serpent...the devil, Satan] by the blood of the Lamb & by the word of their testimony; for they did not love their lives to the point of death.” (Rev. 12:11)
- “Christ the Victor...is the ultimate [Atonement] metaphor. [This claim is based on the fact that] the first and last mentions of atonement in the Bible...refer to Jesus’ triumph over Satan by his death. In Gen. 3:15 [the seed of the woman will crush the serpent’s head]. Later Christians... saw this as pointing forward to the crucifixion of Jesus (‘the serpent strikes the seed’s heel’) & Jesus’ victory over Satan in his death (‘crush the serpent’s head’)...The last mention of Jesus’ death in the NT...in Rev. 12 [echoes] Gen. 3:15...A woman gives birth to a child [whom] the red dragon (Satan) is poised to devour...The dragon is defeated by the ‘blood of the Lamb’ (Rev. 12:11)...In [Bible ‘bookends’]...the...victory of the woman’s seed over...Satan is attained by the blood of Jesus Christ...[So, the Bible] is bracketed at the beginning & the end, with God’s design for the ‘seed of the woman’ to defeat the Evil One.” [M. F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology*, p.]

B. The narrative arc of Christ’s ministry

- “Inherent to the gospel narratives is the presence of Satan & evil...The gospels can’t be read without acknowledging the contrasting presence of evil & Satan. The reality of the presence of God in Christ is unfolded in the context of conflict with & eventual victory over evil.” [Martyn J. Smith, *Divine Violence & Christus Victor*, Middlesex University, p. 188]
- Christ the Victor views “the overall life of Jesus [conflict with Satan, demons, etc. But,] this does not denigrate the ongoing centrality of Christ’s [cross]...If the earthly life of Christ as a whole is to be regarded as a continuous process of victorious conflict, it is His death that is the final & decisive battle.” [M. J. Smith, ...*Violence & Christus Victor*, p. 191]
- Through Jesus’ whole life, ministry & death “not [just] at the cross as an isolated event, Christ actually overcame & defeated ...Satan, literally & violently wresting back from him the humans...he had previously owned...This...differentiates [Christ the Victor] from other atonement models...It is not only concerned with the events of Jesus’ passion, crucifixion & resurrection. Instead, the Christ the Victor...expresses every single aspect of Christ’s life – from incarnation to resurrection–...as being fundamentally about one thing: victor[y of the]...kingdom of God over...the destructive, oppressive kingdom of the Satan.” [Martyn J. Smith, *Divine Violence & Christus Victor*..., pp. 193-194]

1. The conflict started early & continued (Matt. 2:16; Lk. 4:1-13)

– Herod “gave orders to massacre all the boys in & around Bethlehem...” (Mt. 2:16)

2. Jesus stared down the evil forces (Luke 11:20-21; 22:53)

– “If I drive out demons by the finger of God...the kingdom of God has come upon you. 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his estate, his possessions are secure. But when one stronger than he attacks & overpowers him, he takes from him all his weapons [whole armor Gk. panoplia] he trusted in, & divides up his plunder.” (Luke 11:20-1)

– “Jesus began...with a private battle against the real enemy [Satan at the temptation]; this battle will continue until its last great showdown, as the powers of darkness gather for their final assault (Lk. 22:53 [at Jesus’ arrest: ‘this is your hour—and the dominion of darkness.’])...Jesus’ task is to defeat the Satan, to break his power, to win the decisive victory which will open the way for God’s new creation...The great victory [will] be completed on the cross.” [N. T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*, pp.]

3. The 'storm cloud of evil,' forms (Jn. 12:31; 14:30)

– “Now is the judgment of this world. Now the ruler of this world will be cast out...The ruler of the world is coming. He has no power over me.” (Jn. 12:31; 14:30)

– “Jesus is right in the middle of the real battle...against the real enemy, who is not...flesh & blood...[but,] the power of darkness, the insidious, sub-personal force of death, deceit & destruction that goes in Scripture by the name...‘the Satan,’” [N. T. Wright, Lent for Everyone p.]

4. Ultimate victory at the cross (Col. 2:15; Heb. 2:14-15; Eph. 1:20b-22a)

– “Since the children shared in flesh & blood, Jesus shared in these, so that through his death he might destroy the one holding the power of death—i.e., the devil, & free those...held in slavery all their lives...” (Heb. 2:14-15)

C. The narrative arc of Ephesians (Eph. 1:20-23; 4:8-11; 6:10-17)

- “I find myself compelled towards...the Christ is Victor theme, the belief that on the cross Jesus has won the victory over the powers of evil...For Paul, Jesus’ death clearly involves a judicial or penal [legal] element...Christ is Victor, the victory over all the powers of evil & darkness, [is] the central theme of atonement theology, around which other varied meanings of the cross find their particular value.” [N. T. Wright, Evil & the Justice of God, pp.]

III. How Do We Apply Redeemer & Victor?

A. Redeemer (Rom. 8:1, 3; Rev. 12:11)

- “There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus...3 For...God...condemned sin in the flesh by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh as a sin offering.” (Rom. 8:1, 3)
- “The reality...[of] the phrase ‘penal substitution’ is: ‘There is therefore now no condemnation’ in Rom. 8:1 [which] is explained by...Rom. 8:3, that God condemned sin in the flesh of his Son: he bore sin’s condemnation in his body, so we don’t bear it. That...is the heart of...‘penal substitution’...” [N. T. Wright, “Cross &...Caricatures,” Fulcrum (2007) p.]

B. Victor (Eph. 6:12-17) “The Son of God was revealed for this purpose: to destroy the devil’s works.” (1 Jn. 3:8b)

1. Satan is not as he is caricatured to be—a red devil with horns & pitchfork!

2. The evil powers are real, dangerous & powerful

– The [Christ the] Victor View takes “seriously original biblical evidence for the Satan as a [real, existing] being and a dangerous & powerful enemy of both God & humans...” [Martyn J. Smith, Divine Violence & Christus Victor, p. 188]

3. Humans are no match for the evil powers

– “[T]hese forces of evil are supernatural, they are stronger than human beings, making it impossible for human beings to overcome them on their own.” [David A. Brondos, Jesus’ Death in NT Thought, p. 50]

4. We stand (Eph. 6:11, 14)

– “Put on the full armor of God so...you can stand against the devil’s schemes...Take up God’s full armor, so...you may be able to resist in the evil day, & having prepared everything, to take your stand. 14 Stand, therefore...” (Eph. 6:11-14)

5. We reach out (Deut. 32:8; Matt. 28:19)

– “When the Most High gave...the nations their [land], when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God. But the Lord’s portion is his people, [Israel].” (Deut. 32:8 ESV)

– “The point Deut. 32:8-9 is that sometime after God separated the people...at Babel...he then assigned each of the 70 nations to the fallen sons of God (...also 70 in number)” [M. Heiser, “Dt. 32:8 & Sons of God,” BIB. SACRA, #158 p. 71]

– “All authority has been given to me in heaven & on earth. 19 Go, therefore, & make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father & of the Son & of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them...” (Mt. 28:18-20)