

Theology for Life

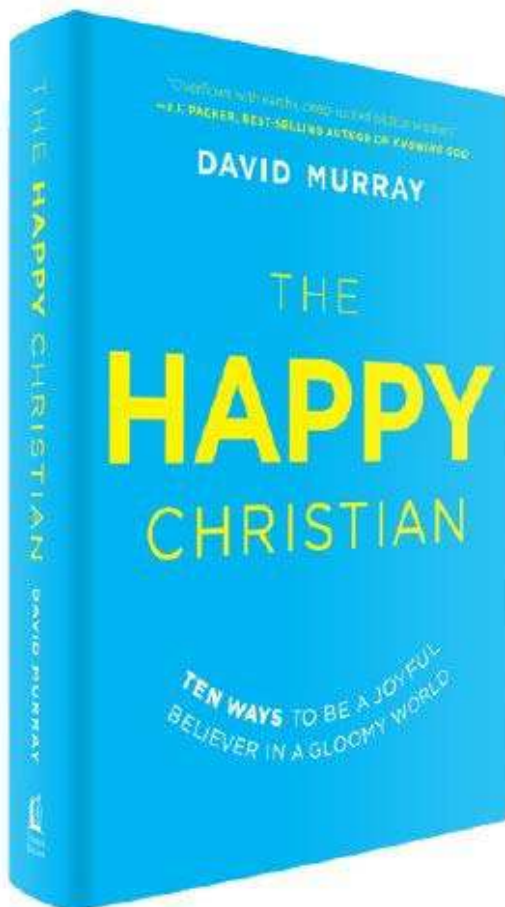
Volume 2 | Issue 1 | Spring 2015



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- *Death in Adam, Life in Christ*
- *Hit List: Taking Aim at the Seven Deadly Sins— A Book Review*

THE HAPPY CHRISTIAN!



FROM THE
AUTHOR OF
JESUS ON
EVERY PAGE

**BUY IT
HERE**

TEN WAYS
TO BE A JOYFUL
BELIEVER
IN A GLOOMY
WORLD

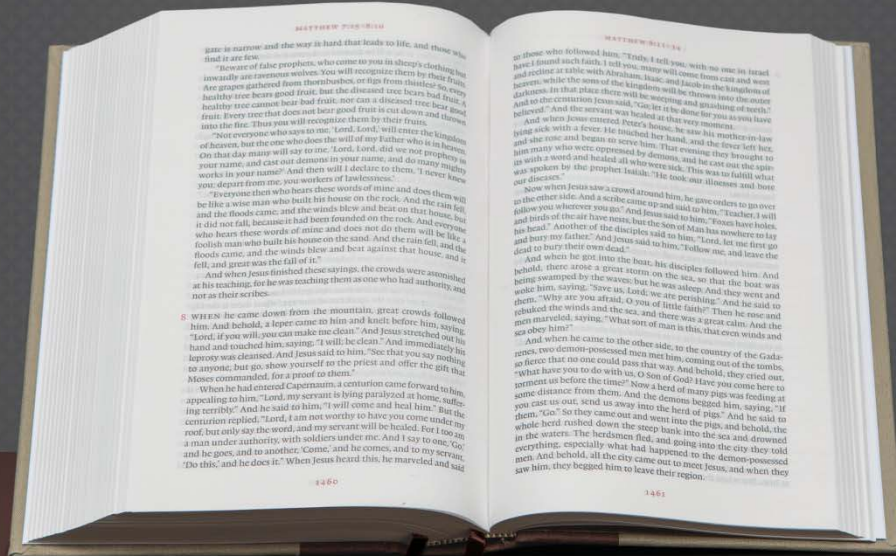
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The *ESV Reader's Bible* was created for those who want to read Scripture like it was originally written - as an unbroken narrative. Verse numbers, chapter and section headings, and translation footnotes are helpful navigational and interpretive tools, but they are also relatively recent conventions. In the *ESV Reader's Bible* they have been removed from the Bible text. The result is a new kind of Bible-reading experience - one that provides an uninterrupted view of the Bible's extended storyline.

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Editor's Corner

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Craig Hurst

Brian Cosby

Michael Boling

DESIGN DIRECTOR & COPY EDITOR

Sarah Jenkins

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Sin is a concept that is by and large discounted and even neglected in the Church. Not that many Pastors don't preach on it—they do—it's more that sin is an uncomfortable topic to talk about. Think about the last time someone pointed out sin in your life to you. Or the last time you were convicted of your sin by the Holy Spirit. No one enjoys having their sin pointed out to them or being convicted of their sin, yet we need both. We need to be in community with God's people. You need me to help you grow in grace. In turn, I need *you* to help *me* grow. After all we all have "blind spots" in our lives, where we attempt to justify our sin. Some people get very defensive when they have their sin pointed out to them. Those who know the grace of God, however, know they don't have to have it all together. They are freed in Christ to be who they are.

The more we understand our sin, the more we can rightly understand the work of Christ. After all, Christ dealt a death blow to sin in His death, burial, and resurrection. Since we're freed from the chains of sin and transferred from the Kingdom of Darkness to the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus, we're free to be who we are in Christ. We're not free to be who we want to be (living however we want to live). Even our freedom in Christ is restricted. We don't get to abuse the freedom we have, but we do get to enjoy it. We're freed from the penalty of sin, but we still experience the very real effects of sin, since we haven't yet been glorified. There is a tension I hope you see

between the “already” and the “not yet” of the Christian life. We’re saints in our standing with God, and yet we’re still sinners, still repenting of our sin. This is why as Martin Luther said, in the very first of his 95 theses he posted to the door of the church at Wittenberg, “When Our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, said, “Repent”, He called for the entire life of believers to be one of repentance.”

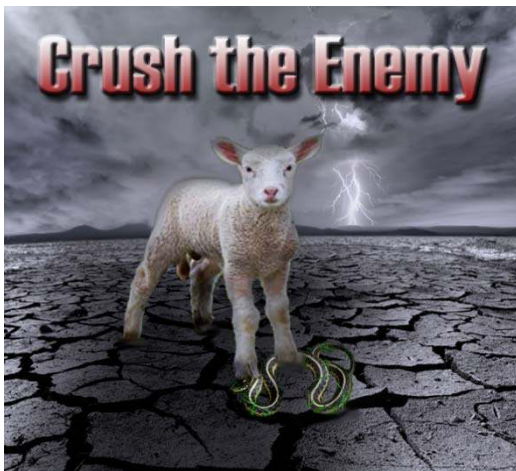
The clearer we see our sin, the better able we’ll be able to understand the finished work of Christ. Jesus’ death and resurrection dealt a death blow to sin. Through Him, we who have died to the flesh can live according to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit empowers God’s people to put sin to death, and live not according to their fleshly desires, but according to the Spirit.

In this issue we’ll be talking about sin. Through the articles, interviews, and book reviews, our aim is to help you consider your sin and to point you to the finished work of Christ, who alone empowers you now through the Holy Spirit to slay your sin. Jesus has sent you out on a mission; He calls you to bring people to Himself through faithfulness to His Word by declaring His gospel to sinners. As you bring sinners to Jesus, He will save them. This means that you and I can be who we are in Christ. We are His; we are His beloved. Yet, we’re not perfect—we’re still growing in His grace. We’re still repenting and we still need one another. I pray this issue helps you understand the doctrine of sin so that you can rightly see your sin, and thus better know, see, and delight in the Savior. It is Christ alone who saves sinners from sin to new life in His Name, and empowers His people to shine the light of the gospel in a dark world.

In Christ Alone,
Dave Jenkins
Executive Editor of *Theology for Life*

Protoevangelium

By Matthew Sims



The legend goes that Ernest Hemingway was eating lunch with some fellow writers at Lüchow's, a German restaurant near Union Square in Manhattan, when he was presented with a peculiar challenge. Hemingway, known for his compact sentences and terse writing style, due in part to his background at a newspaper, is challenged to write a novel in six words. He scribbles down these six words on a napkin: *“For sale: Baby shoes; never worn.”* For anyone who has lost a child or miscarried, these six words put a knot in your stomach. Without explaining the background or incidents, Hemingway captures the affections of his readers. Whether this idea is based on real circumstances or is apocryphal, the point is made—good stories don’t need a lot of words. And there’s something

to be said for leaving something to the imagination.

The Sound of the Gospel in the Garden

Greater than any human author, God has crafted the grandest story of all time. However, the story was veiled in darkness until the arrival of the God-Man from Nazareth, Jesus Christ. The first hint God reveals regarding the coming Savior (Jesus) arrives in Genesis 3:15. God offers hope for forgiveness and life for the man and woman (Gen. 3:17-19), but He starts with the serpent:

*“I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and her offspring;
he shall bruise your head,
and you shall bruise his heel.”*

Genesis 3:15 is what theologians call the *protoevangelium*.

“Protoevangelium” is Latin for *first* (“proto”) *gospel* (“evangelium”). This “first gospel” is riddled with intrigue!

*Who is her offspring?
How will he bruise the serpent’s head?
And how will the serpent bruise his heel?
How long will this take?
Will this immediately reverse the curse?*

Those who wish to describe the Bible as a book of rules have never perused the Bible

from front to back. It is a grand story—a story about a Hero who comes to crush the head of the serpent. The gun goes off in act one. We find it, and now the rest of the story is spent finding out who pulled the trigger. It's important to note a few things. First, God did not *verbally* punish the serpent for its own sake. John Calvin says:

“The Lord spoke not for the sake of the serpent but of the man; for what end could it answer to thunder against the serpent in unintelligible words? Wherefore respect was had to men; both that they might be affected with a greater dread of sin, seeing how highly displeasing it is to God, and that hence they might take consolation for their misery, because they would perceive that God is still propitious to them.” (Commentary on Genesis)

God speaks to the serpent *for man*. He does not want him to lose hope or to think all is lost. His posture towards man is still *gracious*. He desires man to hear the punishment for the serpent is a promised Savior.

Second, the parallel structure is ambiguous. I have heard many theologians make the point that the serpent's bruising the heel isn't a *final* death blow, whereas the Savior's blow will be. For instance, Calvin says:

“For in the terms head and heel there is a distinction between the superior and the inferior. And thus God leaves some remains of dominion to man; because he so places the mutual disposition to injure each other, that yet their condition should not be equal, but man should be superior in the conflict.”

Some translations replace “bruise your head” with *crush* (NIV 84). The reason, as

Calvin notes, is that the blows are not equal. However, that clarity is missing from the original narrative. In *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, Dr. John H. Walton states that the nature of the serpent's position on the ground means the strike must occur at the heel. Anyone who has lived in an

area with poisonous snakes knows a bite to the heel can be dead-

ly. What's more, Satan's blow to the Man's heel was a death blow. Jesus died on the cross. Satan has done his worst, but man will *still live*. In the other, the Man strikes the *final* death blow to the serpent. In the book, *Evil and Justice of God*, N.T. Wright says:

“The story of Gethsemane and of the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth present themselves in the New Testament as the strange, dark conclusion to the story of what God does about evil, of what happens to God's justice when it takes human flesh, when it gets its feet muddy in the garden and its hands bloody on the cross.” (74)

The Cross is where we see most clearly the serpent's blow to Man's heel, and the tomb is where we see the crushing power of the gospel over Satan. In *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, Christopher Tolkien says:

“The Resurrection was the greatest ‘eucatastrophe’ possible in the greatest Fairy Story—and produces that essential emotion: Christian joy which produces tears because it is qualitatively so like sorrow, because it comes from those places

“Greater than any human author, God has crafted the grandest story of all time.”

where Joy and Sorrow are at one, reconciled, as selfishness and altruism are lost in Love."

That's the protoevangelium in a nutshell.

Beginning at Moses

The beauty of this gospel proclamation is its brevity and its intrigue. We fill a lot of the holes in naturally now because we know the full story. However, the original hearers (Adam and Eve) and audience (Israel) were left with a lot of questions. As redemptive history unfolds, God reveals bits of character detail for this Serpent-Crusher. Often the readers of Scripture didn't understand the signs. Luke records an example of this:

13 That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. 16 But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad. 18 Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" 19 And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22 Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24 Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see." 25 And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:13-27)

Notice the phrase *beginning with Moses and all the Prophets*. That's shorthand for Jesus went through the entire Scripture and showed Himself to them. I cannot unravel this thread, but I encourage you to use this article and its exploration of the first gospel as a springboard for further study. Dr. Michael P. V. Barrett in his book, *Beginning at Moses*, says, "If we know who Christ is, what He does, and what He is like, we should be able to 'two and two' together and see Him even if...we are not using a red letter edition" (19). We have the benefit of the full revelation of Jesus Christ in the New Testament so we know *who He is, what He does, and what He is like*. Use this knowledge as you read through the Old Testament.

Taking my cue from Barrett's *Beginning at Moses*, I will share several guides for you as you read. First, the structure of Israel as a nation and the *cultus* of its worship is built around three offices—prophet, priest, and king. The Westminster Shorter Catechism says:

Question 23: *“What offices doth Christ execute as our Redeemer?”*

Answer 23: *“Christ, as our Redeemer, executeth the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in his estate of humiliation and exaltation.”*

Notice the catechism connects these offices with our redemption—Christ's work as Serpent-Crusher. Also, most of Israel's stories center on pivotal characters in these offices. As you will come to find out, even the best of these men and women have moral failures. The most well-known may be King David. He was a man after God's heart, but also a murderer and an adulterer. As you're reading the Old Testament, you will often find descriptions of someone fulfilling these offices who does so perfectly—with no imperfections or moral failures. Again the Westminster Shorter Catechism offers helpful descriptions of how Christ executes these offices (#24, 25, and 26):

“Christ executeth the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by his Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.”

“Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us.”

“Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies.”

So as you read the Old Testament, look for these actions described perfectly. The Psalms are a fertile soil for this kind of discovery. Psalms 2, for instance, is one of my favorite royal Psalms. Also, Micah 5:2-3 where the writer describes the King coming from this lowly city, “Whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting.”

Second, the Serpent-Crusher was God-Man. This point is nestled in with our first—because naturally the question becomes, “Is there a man who could fulfill these offices perfectly?” We clearly see man after man failing at doing so. Also, when we examine the passages discussing this perfect Prophet, Priest, and King fulfilling His office, He holds a divine prerogative. The Nicene Creed provides an explanation for this seemingly-impossible notion:

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.”

We do not just have a man. Yes He was fully man, but is also fully God. So as you read the Old Testament, look for a Man who promised to do things only God should be able to do. Isaiah 53 comes to mind. Isaiah writes, “The Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (v. 6b). What man could carry all of our iniquity?

Third, Christ is evident in the covenants God makes. The *protoevangelium* is a kind of promise from God. Barrett notes, “The promise to Adam and Eve appeared to be in jeopardy [after God flooded the world], but God made a covenant with No-

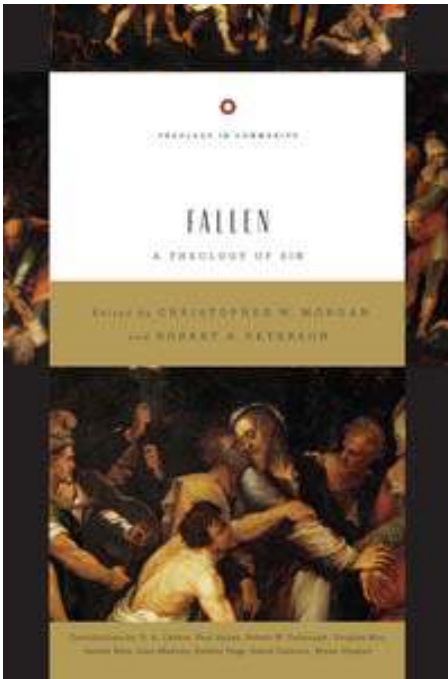
ah” (120). Also, “God pledged to Abraham that a seed, ‘the Seed,’ would come into his line who would bless all the people on earth. By repeating the promise to Isaac and Jacob, God identified the specific Abrahamic line through which the worldwide blessing would come” (121). And “God made a covenant with David that the ideal King would be from his family and that He would rule forever” (ibid). So as you read the Old Testament, follow the covenant bread crumbs to discover more about the Messiah.

Finally, Christ is evident in “Christophanies”. Again Barrett explains, “A *Christophany* was a particular kind of theophany: a *pre-incarnate appearance of Christ in human form*...Christophanies provide a richly rewarding place to pursue our objective of seeing Christ in the Old Testament” (146). A key term to look for as you read these biblical passages is the term “*Angel of the Lord*”. This messenger from God provides several hints that he holds the unique characteristics of Jesus Christ, the God-Man. He speaks as Jehovah in the first person (Gen 16:11, 21:17), but also speaks of Jehovah in the third person (Gen 22:12). You will also see the Angel of the Lord commands obedience (Ex. 23:21-22), forgiveness of sin (Ex. 34:5-7), and worship (Ex. 3:5). So as you read the Old Testament, look for the title *Angel of the Lord* and see how He describes himself, how He describes God, what actions He takes, and what He demands for himself.

These examples (and reflections) are not exhaustive. I would recommend picking up Michael P. V. Barrett’s book, *Beginning at Moses*, as a guide for further study. Start in Genesis and take particular note of chapter 3 and the first gospel proclamation. Read the rest of the Old Testament like a mystery novel looking for clues about who this Serpent-Crusher could be. When you’ve finished the Old Testament and have built your character profile, see if Christ fulfills it. The serpent has done its worst, my friends, but our Savior lives and reigns at the right hand of the Father.

***Fallen: A Theology of Sin* - Author Interview with Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson**

By Jennifer Guo



Christopher W. Morgan (PhD, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary) is professor of theology and Dean of the School of Christian Ministries at California Baptist University. He is the author and editor of several books, including *Suffering and the Goodness of God*.

Robert A. Peterson (PhD, Drew University) is professor of systematic theology at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He is the author and editor of numerous books and articles, including *The Glory of God* and *The Deity of Christ*.

T4L: With the abundance of theology books, both single volumes as well as series, what prompted you to produce a new series? What lack did you see that you hoped to fill with the *Theology in Community* series?

Chris and Robert: We formed and named the series as we did for two reasons. First, *Theology in Community* means we want to promote clear biblical thinking and godly responses to theological issues, both historic and contemporary. As we examine issues central to the Christian faith, we strive not only to follow a sound theological method but also to display it. Chapters addressing the Old and New Testaments on the book's subject form the heart of each volume. Subsequent chapters synthesize the biblical teaching and link it to historical, philosophical, systematic, and pastoral concerns. Far from being mere collections of essays, the volumes are carefully crafted so that the voices of the various experts combine to proclaim a unified message.

Second, *Theology in Community* seeks to do theology in teams. The teachings of the Bible were forged in real-life situations by leaders in God's covenant communities. Theology was formulated by the Church for the Church. This series

seeks to recapture that biblical reality. Scholars from many backgrounds, disciplines, and experiences with academic credentials work together. They have a high view of Scripture, robust evangelical convictions, and love grace. They are personally involved in ministry, serving as teachers, pastors, and missionaries. They stand in continuity with the historic Church, care about the global church, share life together with others in local churches, and aim to write for the good of the Church.

“...sin is not something created or authored by God.”

doctrine of sin? Why is it crucial for Christians to have a robust theology of sin?

Chris: I have been looking to learn from such a volume on the theology of sin ever since I was in seminary. I took an outstanding course on sin from John Mahony (one of the contributors to this book) and found the doctrine of sin to be a rarely considered but much needed lens by which to understand God, revelation, humanity, Christ, his saving work, salvation, the church, eschatology, etc. It also shapes how we understand and live out evangelism, missions, pastoral leadership, ministry, ethics, preaching, counseling, etc.

T4L: Dr. Morgan, your chapter traces the doctrine of sin through the overarching biblical themes of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation. What insights can we gain about sin from this approach

that we wouldn't glean from other approaches such as a systematic one?

Chris: I do not recall seeing sin treated in this way. And I as outlined how the doctrine of sin was interwoven into the themes of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation, I was surprised at how most of the key issues concerning sin emerge in the broad storyline. I personally think the storyline itself and the major events (Creation, Fall, Redemption, New Creation) shed much light on the doctrine of sin. Creation shows us important truths, as addressed below. Fall is more obvious as it is squarely on the doctrine of sin. Redemption is critical for viewing sin, as we see what sin cost, what God does to address it, and how the events and imagery of Christ's saving work communicate insights, etc. New Creation helps us see sin as a temporary intruder, ultimately judged and defeated. Indeed, the return of Christ, judgment, hell, and heaven all shed light on sin. But what helps me the most is how the storyline helps me see sin in proportion, not as the key theme but as a backdrop and context of God's grace.

T4L: It's generally understood that sin entered the world at the Fall, that Christ's death redeemed us from our sins, and that at the consummation sin will be completely and finally be defeated. But what can we learn about sin from creation, before sin entered humanity?

Chris and Robert: At first glance, one might conclude that creation's role in the biblical story has little to contribute to our understanding of sin. After all, sin is not even mentioned. Ah, but that silence speaks volumes. Note two critical principles related to sin.

First, sin is not something created or authored by God. Rather, God created a good universe and good human beings. Genesis 1–2 shows the Creator to be transcendent, sovereign, personal, immanent, and *good*. God’s goodness is displayed in the goodness of his creation, evidenced by the steady refrain, “And God saw that it was good” (1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25), a goodness accentuated on the sixth day: “Behold, it was very good” (v. 31). God’s generous provisions of light, land, vegetation, and animals are blessings given for man’s benefit, as are the abilities to know God, work, marry, and procreate. God blesses man with the Sabbath, places him in the delightful Garden of Eden, gives him a helper, and establishes only one prohibition, given not to stifle man but to promote his welfare. The good God created a good world for the good of his creatures. Humans too were created good and blessed beyond measure, being made in God’s image, with an unhindered relationship with God and with freedom. As a result, casting blame for sin on the good and generous God is unbiblical and unfounded.

Second, sin is not original. It has not always existed. From a theological standpoint. God’s creation of the universe out of nothing shows that he alone is independent, absolute, and eternal. Everything else has been created. Further, the inherent goodness of creation leaves no room for a fundamental dualism between spirit and matter. Contrary to some philosophical and religious traditions, the Bible teaches that matter is a part of God’s creation and is good. Sin is ethical, not physical or tied to the cosmos itself. From a historical standpoint, the story of creation recounts that there was a time when there was no sin. Sin is not original. Indeed, the

very fact that our world now includes sin testifies that it is not now the way it was, and therefore, as Cornelius Plantinga entitles his important book on sin, *Not the Way It’s Supposed to Be*.

T4L: After looking at sin throughout the whole Bible and then addressing it from the perspectives of biblical, historical, and systematic theology, Fallen ends with three chapters on specialized topics: “Satan, Sin, and Evil”, “Sin and Temptation”, and “Repentance that Sings”. Please tell us a little about why these topics were chosen.

Chris and Robert: “Satan, Sin, and Evil” addresses the biblical teaching about Satan, as well as how Satan relates to sin and evil. It helps readers build their theology on what the Bible actually teaches about this, rather than speculation.

“Sin and Temptation” addresses what all Christians face: temptation. A book on sin without pastoral guidance on how to resist temptation would miss the mark. We all need not only to learn about the doctrine of sin, but to walk with God in the power of His grace.

“Repentance that Sings” concludes the volume with a very important message: sin is never the point, God’s grace is! So to study sin but not stress grace would miss the proportions of the biblical witness. Sin does not define us; God’s grace defines us. Thus, our repentance should not be primarily viewed as misery but as a delighting in God, His grace, His forgiveness, His presence, and His joy in giving us not only a right standing before Him but also an ability to love him and walk with Him.

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

By Dave Jenkins



Every person is affected by Adam's disobedience; the effects of which are felt every day because every man, woman, and child is born into original sin, and has thus received a sin nature. Only Christ through His atoning sacrifice can justify His people by removing the stain of sin and death through His death and resurrection.

Looking at the Immediate Context

The immediate context of Romans 5:12-17 is Romans 5:1-11 where Paul completes his case that God justifies sinners on the basis of faith alone, and then turns to counter the notion that although believers receive salvation by faith, they will reserve it by good works. He argues that they are bound eternally to Jesus

Christ, preserved by His power and not by human effort (Isa. 11:5; Ps. 36:5; Lam. 3:23; Eph. 1:18-20; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 10:23). For the Christian, the evidences of that eternal tie are: 1) his peace with God (Rom. 5:1-2) his standing in grace (v.2a); 3) his hope of glory (vv.2b-5a); 4) his receiving of divine love (vv.5b-8); 5) his certain escape of divine wrath (vv.9-10); and 6) his joy in the Lord (v.11). Romans 5:12-21 is one of the most enigmatic passages in the entire book, Paul sets out to show how one man's death can provide salvation for many. To prove his point, he uses Adam to establish the principle that it is possible for one man's actions to inexorably affect many people.

The Larger Context

The book of Romans takes the form of a theological treatise framed by an epistolary opening (1:1-17) and closing (15:14-16:27). The opening contains the usual prescript (1:1-7) and thanksgiving (1:8-15) and is concluded with a transitional statement of the theme of the letter: the gospel as the revelation of God's righteousness, a righteousness that can be experienced only by faith (1:16-17). In Romans 1:18-4:25 Paul sets forth the gospel as the righteousness of God by faith as the theme. Paul gives this theme by explaining why it was necessary for God to manifest his righteousness and why humans can experience this righteousness only by faith. Sin, as Paul affirms, has gained a stranglehold on all people and only an act of God, experienced as a free gift through faith, can

break that stranglehold (1:18-3:20). In Romans 5:1-8:39 Paul sets forth the gospel as the power of God or salvation. Romans 9:1-11:36 addresses the gospel and Israel. In Romans 12:1-15:13 Paul explains the gospel and the transformation of life. Romans 15:14-16:27 is the conclusion of the book of Romans. The author of Romans is Paul (Romans 1:1).

“Mankind is a single entity, continuing a divinely ordered solidarity.”

Examining Romans

5:12

The phrase “therefore” in Romans

5:12 connects what follows with what has been declared namely, that believers have been reconciled to God by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (vv.8-11). Paul begins the analogy of Christ with Adam, the common principle being that, in each case, a far-reaching effect on countless others was generated through one man.

The phrase “just as sin came” refers not to a particular sin, but to the inherent propensity to sin that entered the human realm whereby men became sinners by nature. Adam passed to all his descendants the inherent sinful nature he possessed because of his first disobedience. That nature is present from the moment of conception (Ps. 51:5), making it impossible for man to live in a way that pleases God. Satan, the father of sin (1 John 3:8), first brought temptation to Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:1-7).

Genesis 3 is important to Paul’s argument in Romans 5:12-21, because Adam was much more than the first husband; he was the first human. Adam stood as the head of the human race. There was much more to Adam’s original

sin than meets the eye. It is abundantly clear that this one man, Adam, brought sin to the human race by his disobedience. One sin, by one man, made the entire world guilty of sin.

The phrase “through one man” emphasizes that when Adam sinned, all mankind sinned in his loins (Rom. 5:18; Heb. 7:7-10). Since his sin transformed his inner nature and brought spiritual death and depravity, that sinful nature would be passed on seminally to his posterity as well (Ps. 51:5). Paul with the phrase, *sin came into the world* does not speak of sins (plural), but of sin, (singular). In this sense, sin does not represent a particular unrighteous act but rather the inherent propensity to unrighteousness. It was not the many sinful acts that Adam eventually committed, but the indwelling sin nature that he came to possess because of his first disobedience that he passed on to his posterity. Just as Adam bequeathed his physical nature to his posterity, he also bequeathed to them his spiritual nature, which henceforth was characterized and dominated by sin.

God made man a procreative race, and when they procreate they pass on to their children, and to their grand-children their own nature—physical, psychological, and spiritual. Mankind is a single entity, continuing a divinely ordered solidarity. Adam represents the entire human race that is descended from him, no matter how many subgroups there may be. Therefore when Adam sinned, all mankind sinned, and because his first sin transformed his inner nature, that [now depraved] nature was also transmitted to his posterity. Because he became spiritually polluted, all his descendants would be polluted in the same way. That pollution has, in fact, accumulated and intensified throughout the age of human history. In-

stead of evolving, as humanists insist, man has devolved, degenerating into greater and greater sinfulness.

Adam was not originally subjected to death, but through his sin it became a grim certainty for him and his posterity. Death has three distinct manifestations: 1) spiritual death or separation from God (Eph. 2:1-2; 4:18); 2) physical death (Heb. 9:27); and 3) eternal death (also called the second death), which includes not only eternal separation from God, but eternal torment in the lake of fire (Rev. 20:11-15). Sin entered the world through one man, so also death, the consequence of sin, entered the world through that one man's sin.

The phrase “because all sinned” means that because all humanity existed in the loins of Adam and have through procreation inherited his fallen-state and depravity, it can be said that all sinned in him. Therefore, all humans are not sinners because they sin, but rather they sin because they are sinners.

There are two possible exegetical answers to the phrase “death spread to all men” that have been proposed throughout church history. The first explanation that has been offered would be a case of imitation (All sinned like Adam), and the second a case of participation (all sinned in and with Adam). The first explanation is associated with Pelagius, the early fifth-century British monk, who denied original sin, taught a form of self-salvation, and was opposed by Augustine. In Pelagius' view Adam was simply the first sinner, and everybody ever since has followed his bad example. Moreover, Paul's actual language could justly be understood in this way. His two words all sinned (*pantes hēmarton*) are precisely those which he has used in 3:23 when affirming that ‘all have

sinned and fall short of the glory of God’.

As John Murray has written, verse 12 of itself is compatible with a Pelagian interpretation, and if Paul had entertained the Pelagian view he could have stated it admirably well in these terms. If Paul meant that death passed upon all because all men were guilty of actual transgression, this is the way he would have said it. At least no more suitable way could be considered.^[1]

Consequently, many have held this position, not least because of the difficulties inherent in the alternative view. For example, C.K. Barret writes straightforwardly: ‘That is, all men sin (3:23), and all men die because they sin.’^[2] Other scholars make much of the use of Adam in the literature of Judaism. 2 Esdras: ‘A grain of evil seed was sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning, and how much wickedness that it brought forth unto this time!’ (2 Esdras 7:118.) ‘In the light of contemporary and near contemporary Jewish thoughts,’ writes John Ziesler ‘it is more likely that Adam is Everyman (and Everywoman), so that to say that Adam sinned is a way of saying that everybody sins. Everyone is his or her own Adam.’^[3] Others, wanting to preserve a stronger link between Adam's sin and the sinning of his posterity, have stressed the transmission of his depraved nature to them: “If they sinned, their sin was due in part to tendencies inherited from Adam.”^[4]

The phrase “all sin” refers to the sins all people have themselves committed after they were born. Such personal sinning has been going on throughout the centuries. This interpretation gives to the word “sinned” the meaning it has everywhere else in Paul's epistles. Paul teaches that death spread to all men because all sinned, which means that death was

transmitted to all men, without exception. “Sinned” translates as the Greek *arōist* tense, indicating that at one point in time all men sinned. That, of course, was the time that Adam first sinned. His sin became mankind’s sin, because all mankind were in his loins

Explanation of Romans 5:13

The phrase “sin is not counted” means that though all men were regarded as sinners (Rom. 5:12), because there was no explicit list of commands, there was no strict accounting of their specific violations. “Where there is no law” refers to the period from Adam to Moses, when God had not yet given the Mosaic Law.

Romans 5:14

“Yet death reigned” means that even without the law, death was universal. All men from Adam to Moses were subject of death, not because of their acts against the Mosaic Law (which they had not been given), but because of their own inherited sinful nature. “Of Adam” refers to those who had no specific revelation as did Adam (Gen. 2:16-17) or those who had the Mosaic Law (Rom. 5:13), but nevertheless sinned against the holiness of God, (i.e., those who “sinned without the law” (2:12).

“A type of the one to come” refers to Adam and Christ who were similar in that their acts affected many others. The point here is mainly one of contrast, in the sense that Christ’s influence for good far outweighs Adam’s effectiveness for evil: the free gift is “not like the trespass.”^[5] This phrase serves as a transition from the apostle’s discussion of the transference of Adam’s sin to the crediting of Christ’s righteousness.

Romans 5:15

Paul uses the word “many” with two distinct meanings in v.15, just as he will the word “all” in v.18. He has already established that all men-- without exception-- bear the guilt of sin and are therefore subject to death (v.12).

The apostle uses the word “many” in a twofold sense. In its first use (“the many died”) it indicates all of Adam’s physical descendants. At the close of that same verse (“overflow to the many”) it indicates all those who belong to Christ. In Romans 5:12 has shown that Adam was responsible for bringing into the world two evils: sin and death. The apostle deals with both of these in turn: Adam’s sin or trespasses (vs. 15-16), and with death (vs. 1). He understands them as being intimately related, and therefore at times mentions both in one breathe.

It is understandable that Paul can say that by reason of Adam’s trespasses the many died. These may are those designated in Romans 5:12 as “all mankind” In connection with the work of God in Christ, for God’s children this evil has been more than canceled out. For them God’s grace and his gift of salvation has changed death into it’s very opposite. Death became a gain (Phil. 1:21). Moreover as to sin, when grace entered, it more than merely returned man to his former state of innocence, it bestowed on him righteousness (verse 1), and life (verse 18), that is, everlasting life (verse 21). The phrase “much more” means that Christ’s one act of redemption was immeasurable, greater than Adam’s one act of condemnation.

Roman 5:16

“The free gift” refers to salvation by grace. Judgment following one trespass re-

fers back to Romans 5:12. Condemnation is the divine guilty verdict, and is the opposite of justification. Many trespasses refers to the fact that Adam brought upon all men the condemnation for only one offense—his willful act of disobedience. Christ, however, delivers the elect from condemnation of many offenses.

Again, in Adam's case a single sin was involved, a sin that resulted in condemnation. In Adam, all human beings are sinners in the sense they are accounted guilty for his sin.^[6] Christ, by his work of redemption, however, made provision for the forgiveness not only of that one sin but also of all those that followed from it. His sacrifice sufficed for them all, and in fact was efficacious for all the sins committed by those who, by sovereign grace, were to place their trust in him. For them condemnation was replaced by justification.

Romans 5:17

“Death reigned” means that Adam's sin brought universal death—exactly opposite the result he expected and Satan had promised: “you will be like God” (Gen. 3:5). Christ's sacrifice brought salvation to those who believe.

“Reign in life” means unlike Adam's act, Christ's act has--and will--accomplish exactly what he intended (Phil 1:6): spiritual life (Eph. 2:5). To reign in life through Christ is to have power over sin. Paul says this in Romans 6:17-18, “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.” Believers know from experience as well as from Scripture that they are still plagued with sin, clothed in the sinful rages of the old self (Eph. 4:22). Sin is no longer the natural master of the believer. In Christ the believer is no longer a victim

of sin but victors over sin (1 Cor. 15:57).

Romans 5:18

“Condemnation” refers back to v.16. One act of righteousness is not a reference to a single event, but generally to Christ's obedience (v.19; Luke 2:49; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38), culminating in the greatest demonstration of that obedience, death on a cross (Phil. 2:8).

Justification for all men does not mean that all men will be saved; salvation is only for those who exercise faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16-17; 3:22, 28, 4:5, 13). Rather, like the word “many” in 5:15, Paul is using “all” with two different meanings for the sake of parallelism, a common practice in the Hebrew Old Testament.

All those who will be made alive are “those who are Christ's,” that is, those who belong to him. Through this answer proves that when Paul uses the expression “all” or “all men” in connection with those who are (or will be) saved, this “all” or “all men” must not be interpreted in the absolute or unlimited sense. This still leaves question answered, namely, “Why does Paul use this strong expression?” To answer this one needs to read the entire epistle. It will then become clear that--among other things-- Paul is combating the ever-present tendency of the Jews to regard themselves as being better than Gentiles. Paul emphasizes here that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile, as it concerns salvation. All men are sinners before God, all are in need of salvation. The way to be saved is the same for everyone.

Paul emphasizes the fact all are sinners before God in order to demonstrate how it is that one trespass resulted in condemnation for all, but that one act of righteousness resulted in justification issuing in life. The point Paul makes regarding this shows that justification not

merely overturns the verdict of guilty, setting aside the sentence of doom, but also opens the gate to eternal life.

Romans 5:19

“Made righteous” refers to one’s legal status before God, and not an actual change in character. Since Paul is contrasting justification and condemnation throughout this passage, he has not yet introduced the doctrine of sanctification (chs. 6-8) which deals with the actual transformation of the sinner as a result of redemption.

Romans 5:20

Although the Mosaic Law is not flawed (Rom. 7:12), its presence caused man’s sin to increase (7:8-11). Thus it made men more aware of their own sinfulness and inability to keep God’s perfect standard (7:7; Gal. 3:21-22), it also served as a tutor to drive them to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

Paul has been speaking about Adam and Christ, type and antitype. Adam transgressed a specific command, and this happened before the promulgation of Sinai’s law. At Sinai the Mosaic Law came in besides “in order that the trespass might increase.” This was the divine intention in giving this law.

This cannot mean that God became the cause of sin’s increase. It means that God’s will and purpose in light of his demand of perfect love man’s consciousness of sin might become sharpened. A vague awareness of the fact that all is not well with him will not drive a man to the Savior, so the law acts as a magnifying glass, and causes sin to stand out in all its heinousness and ramifications. Moreover, this increase in the knowledge of sin is very necessary. It will prevent a person from imagining that in his/her own power he/she can overcome sin. The more he/

she, in light of God’s law, begins to see his own sinfulness and weakness, the more he/she will thank God for the manifestation of His grace in Jesus Christ. The result is where sin increases, grace increases also.

Romans 5:21

“Each and every time we look to the pages of God’s Word, what it tells us can be fully depended upon.”

Romans 5:21 is the final summary of the analogy of Adam and Christ.

Here, Paul teaches the sin of Adam viewed as the representative of mankind whose guilt, due to the solidarity of the human race, is imputed to all of mankind, a fact to which all the sins of human beings bear witness. When Adam fell, it seems as if sin was about to triumph completely. However, according to God’s plan, grace intervened, and in the case of all God’s children, triumphed over sin. Sin brought condemnation and death; first of all physical death, but also spiritual and eternal death. Sin and Death are personified: Sin being, as it were, the sovereign; Death, his Viceroy. For the moment it seemed as if Sin would be able to claim the victory. Grace meet sin head-on and defeats it. Righteousness is not a righteousness provided by man but a righteousness imputed by God. It was through this righteousness that grace triumphed over sin.

When the sinner is clothed with the righteousness provided by God, he is on his way to everlasting life (Romans 5:18), the glorious life in the new heaven and earth; a life which, in principle, is given to him even here and now. Apart from the immeasurable marvelous sacrifice of

“Jesus Christ our Lord,” a sacrifice revealing a love which, in all its dimensions, surpasses all human understanding, grace would never have been able to conquer sin and death. The unifying thought, that ties together the seven concepts in Romans 5:21 is this, “Where sin increased, grace increased all the more,” namely, the grace embodied in the supreme sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and revealed to mankind through Him.

Adam as a Historical Person

The issue of whether Adam and Eve are historical persons is a vital issue because it has bearing on the believer’s biblical and theological understanding of God, the Bible, creation, marriage, sin, and salvation. The consequence of Adam and Eve not being historical persons is that the creation record in Genesis is undermined, the institution of marriage (which God established) defamed, and the reason Jesus came to die for sin torn from the biblical record. Those who advocate that Adam and Eve are not historical persons minimize God’s Word which teaches that Adam and Eve were real people who lived in real history. The issue of Adam and Eve is important, not only because

“According to Paul, Jesus stood in the place of all God’s chosen race.”

built their argument. A believer who believes in a biblical worldview understands that Adam and Eve are historical persons.

Ideas have consequences, and those consequences are evidenced in how one understands Genesis 1-3. A literal interpretation of Genesis 1-3 will help the believer to have a proper understanding of

ideas have consequences, but because the foundation upon which the scientists

God, His Word, and the person and work of Jesus Christ. If one takes Genesis 1-3 any way other than literally, then it will result in a faulty understanding of the Bible and in asking the wrong questions, such as the scientists are asking about whether Adam and Eve are real persons. Understanding Adam and Eve as historical persons is important because Paul explains in Romans 5:12-21 that Adam and Eve were, in fact, real persons.

Jesus the Representative Head of His Elect People

At the dawn of human history, Adam stood as the representative head of all people who would ever live. By one act of disobedience, he brought sin, death, and condemnation to the human race (5:12). Christ, on the other hand, stood as the representative of another race of people—a chosen race (1 Peter 2:9). In His one act of obedience, He prepared a “free gift” (v.15) that brings justification (v.16) for His people.

According to Paul, Jesus stood in the place of all God’s chosen race. Adam represented all mankind; Christ represented all the elect. If Christ had died for all men, then justification and life would accrue to all men. This is defined as universalism, the teaching that all men eventually will be saved. Christ died specifically and exclusively for all who would actually receive His righteousness. On the basis of the actions of “one,’ ‘many” are constituted either sinners or righteous. Adam is the representative head as well as the physical root of all, and all sinned and fell when he sinned. In contrast, ‘by the one man’s obedience’, those whom Christ represents are “made righteous” in Him. Christ is the representative Head, as well as the spiritual root of the new humanity. Through His resurrection they are given new birth and

a living hope (1 Peter. 1:3; Eph. 2:1-10). Either the atonement is limited in its effect—that is, Christ died for all, but not all are saved—or it is limited in its scope: Christ did not die for all, but all for whom He died are saved. That is to say, either the atonement is unlimited/limited—unlimited extent/limited effect—or limited/unlimited—limited extent/unlimited effect. The latter is true; it had a limited extent with an unlimited effect. There is an unlimited application of the limited atonement of Christ. There is an unlimited application of the limited atonement of Christ. His one act of obedience accomplished all that He intended—the salvation of God’s elect.

Application for Churches

Original sin or “inherited guilt” means that all member of the human race were represented by Adam in the time of testing in the Garden of Eden. As the representative of mankind, Adam sinned, and God counted all of humanity guilty as well as Adam. God counted Adam’s guilt as belonging to man, and since God is the ultimate judge of all things in the universe, and since his thoughts are always true, Adam’s guilt does, in fact, belong to man. God rightly imputed Adam’s guilt to mankind.

Original sin and imputation are important to the local Church because these theological truths provide a biblical and theological framework, in which the Church can proclaim the Gospel to the nations. Original sin and imputation are important to the proclamation of the Gospel, because it challenges the hearers, on one hand, to deal with their sin by taking responsibility of it, and to realize that the source of forgiveness is not themselves, but another—Jesus Christ who alone is righteous. Imputation and original sin are

fundamental aspects of the Gospel, and therefore affect the ministry of the local church as it seeks to minister to people who inherited Adam’s guilt but now have received the righteousness of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

Application for Individual Believers

Evangelicals of all persuasions believe that man receives a sinful disposition, or a tendency to sin, as an inheritance from Adam. In addition to the legal guilt that God imputes to man because of Adam’s sin; man inherits a sinful nature because of Adam. This inherited nature is called original sin.

The imputation of Adam’s guilt to man is important because it confirms that man in his nature lacks spiritual good before God, which means in man’s actions are totally unable to do spiritual good before God. This is extremely uncomfortable for postmodern men to hear because they view themselves as sovereign. The fact is that in terms of man’s legal standing before God any one sin-- even what may seem like a very small sin-- makes one legally guilty before God, and thus is worthy of eternal punishment. Adam and Even learned this in the Garden of Eden, where God told them that one act of disobedience would result in death (Gen. 2:17). Paul affirmed this in Romans 5:16, “And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.” This one sin made Adam and Even sinners before God, no longer able to stand in his holy presence.

Scripture affirms the universal sinfulness of mankind. “They have all turned aside; together they have be-

come corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one." (Psalm 14:3) David says, "Enter not into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you." (Psalm 143:2). In the New Testament, Paul has an extensive argument in Romans 1:18-3:20 showing that all people, both Jews and Greek, stand guilty before God. He says, "What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;" (Rom. 3:9-10). He is certain that "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Rom. 3:23). James, the Lord' brother, admits, "...for we all stumble in many ways." (James 3:2), and if he, as a leader and an apostle in the early church, could admit that he made many mistakes, then the believer should also be willing to admit that. John the beloved disciple said: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." (1 John 1:8-10). The true measure of man's responsibility and guilt is not man's ability to obey God, but rather the absolute perfection of God's moral law and His own holiness (which is reflected in that law). "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4).

When a Christian sins, his or her legal standing before God is unchanged. He or she is still forgiven, for "there is therefore now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). Salvation is not based on the merits of man, but is a free gift of God (Rom. 6:23), and Christ' death paid for all of man's sins-- past,

present, and future--- Christ died "for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3), without distinction. In theological terms, the believer keeps his/her justification.

Moreover, believers are still children of God and still retain membership in God's family. John teaches this in 1 John 1:8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.", and 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, we are God' children now" The fact that the believer has sin remaining in their lives does not mean that they lose their status as God's children. In theological terms, believers keep their adoption.

When believers sin, even though God does not cease to love them, He is displeased with them. Paul tells believers that it is possible for Christians to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God" (Eph. 4:30); when believers sin, they cause Him sorrow and He is displeased with them. The author of Hebrews reminds believers that "The Lord disciplines him who he loves" (Heb. 12:6), and that "the Father of spirits disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness" (Heb. 12:9-10). When believers disobey God, God the Father is grieved, much as an earthly father is grieved with his children's disobedience, and he disciplines us.

Hebrews 12, together with many historical examples in Scripture, shows that God's fatherly displeasure often leads to discipline in the believers Christian lives: "He disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness" (Heb. 12:10). Regarding the need for regular confession and repentance of sin, Jesus reminds believers that they are to pray each day, "Forgive us our sins, as we also have forgiven those who sin against us" (Matt. 6:12).

When believers sin as Christians,

it is not only their personal relationship with God that is disrupted. Their Christian life and fruitfulness in ministry are also damaged. Jesus warns believers, “As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me” (John 15:4). When believers stray from fellowship with Christ because of sin in their lives, they diminish the degree to which they are abiding in Christ.

The New Testament writers have much to say about the destructive consequences of sin in the lives of believers. In fact, many sections of the epistles are taken up with rebuking and discouraging Christians from sin that they are committing. Paul says that if Christians yield themselves to sin, they increasingly become “slaves” of sin (Rom. 6:16), whereas God wants Christians to progress upward on a path of ever-increasing righteousness in life. If the believer’s goal is to grow in increasing fullness of life until the day they die and pass into the presence of God in heaven, to sin is to do an about-face and begin to walk downhill away from the goal of the likeness to God; it is to go in a direction that “leads to death” (Rom. 6:16) and eternal separation from God, the direction from which the believer was rescued when they became Christians. Peter says that sinful desires that remain in the believers hearts “wage war against your soul” (1 Peter 2:11)- the military language correctly translates Peter’s expression and conveys the imagery of that sinful desires within believers are like soldiers in battle and their target is the spiritual well-being of the people of God. To give in to such sinful desires, to nurture and cherish them in one’s hearts, is to give food, shelter, and welcome to the enemy’ troops. If the believer yields to the desires that “wage war” against their souls, they will

inevitable feel loss of spiritual strength, some diminution of spiritual power and loss of effectiveness in the work of God’s Kingdom.

A Final Thought...

Understanding Romans 5:12-21 has huge implications for the believer’s understanding of sin, redemption, and the Christian life. Pastors, teachers and those involved in Christian ministry need to understand Adam as a historical person because this affects how they will minister to people who like themselves have been affected by Adam’s disobedience, and thus received a sin nature. Only Christ can take what is meant for evil, and turn it around for His glory, and make all things new.

In Romans 5:12-21 Paul teaches that Adam’s disobedience affects everyone ever born, but Christ’s ministry of reconciliation grants man the ability to be reconciled to God. While death has reigned; the death and resurrection of Jesus is infinitely greater than death. The death and resurrection of Jesus defeated death and now He (Jesus) grants His people a hope rooted in Himself, for His glory to proclaim to the nations that they may dwell in the refuge of His joy forever.

[1] John Murray, *The Epistle to The Romans* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1959), 182.

[2] C.K. Barret, *The Epistle to The Romans* (New York, Harpercollins, 1989), 11.

[3] John Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans* (London, Scm Press, 1993), 147.

[4] Arthur Headlam, William Sanday, *A Critical And Exegetical Commentary On The Epistle To The Romans* (Montana, Kessinger Press, 2007), 134.

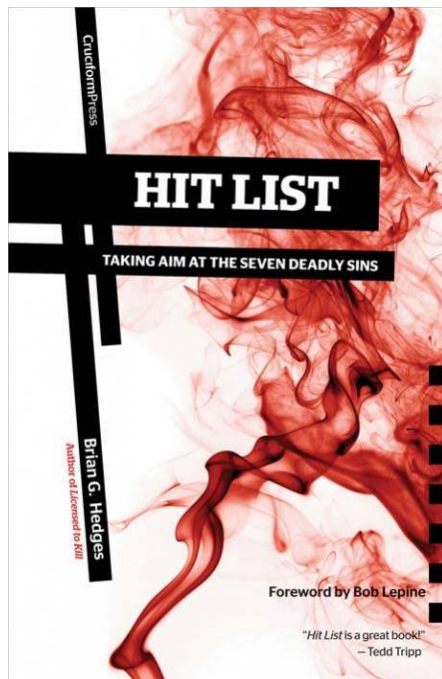
[5] William Hendriksen, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1980), 180.

[6] *Atonement in The Pauline Corpus “The Scandal of the Cross” by Richard Gaffin in The Glory of the Atonement*, Edited Charles E. Hill & Frank A. James III, (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2004), 149.

A Book Review:

Hit List: Taking Aim at the Seven Deadly Sins

By Michael Boling



When it comes to sin we are all guilty. Furthermore, we know we are not supposed to sin, but we so often fall prey to missing the mark of God's expectations for us. Our daily list of sins is likely rather lengthy. The question is, do we understand the how and why of sin's entanglement into so many areas of our lives? And more importantly, how do we sever its hold and influence? Brian Hedges, in his latest book, *Hit List: Taking Aim at the Seven Deadly Sins*, explores the sev-

en deadly sins, which form the crux of where all sins find their root.

First off, let me say I do not often make the statement that a book is a must-read, other than the Bible of course. With that said, let me begin this review by stating that out of the more than 100 books I have read and reviewed this year, Hedges' work tops them all. From the first page to the final sentence in this book, I found myself informed, challenged, and spurred to deal with the pernicious seven deadly sins and their progeny. Hedges masterfully guides the reader through each of the seven deadly sins, exploring in a scholarly manner what each sin is all about, while providing the reader with biblical truth on how to deal with those issues in his/her life.

I was truly amazed at how much information is packed into this barely-over-100-page book.

Hedges engages a number of respected authors, digging into the history of theological insight regarding the seven deadly sins of pride, envy, wrath, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust. While the seven deadly sins was something I had heard of for quite some time, I was honestly quite clueless as to the background of how this list was created and why these particular sins were considered by many to be the

“gateway drug”, if you will, to so many of the sinful behaviors we observe and participate in on a daily basis. Essentially, these seven deadly sins are the most wanted when it comes to rebellious actions against a holy God.

Since Hedges’ entire book is so excellent, let me focus on a couple of highlights, the first being as noted earlier, the obvious research that went into writing this book. Hedges does a marvelous job of weaving some valuable quotes into his presentation of the material. What this demonstrates is that he reveals to the reader the consistent opinion of theologians, both present and from days past, on

the issue of the seven deadly sins. The only issue I have with that is now I want to go out

“Hedges does a marvelous job of weaving some valuable quotes into his presentation of the material....”

and purchase all of the books Hedges cites! Of course that is not necessarily a bad thing now is it?

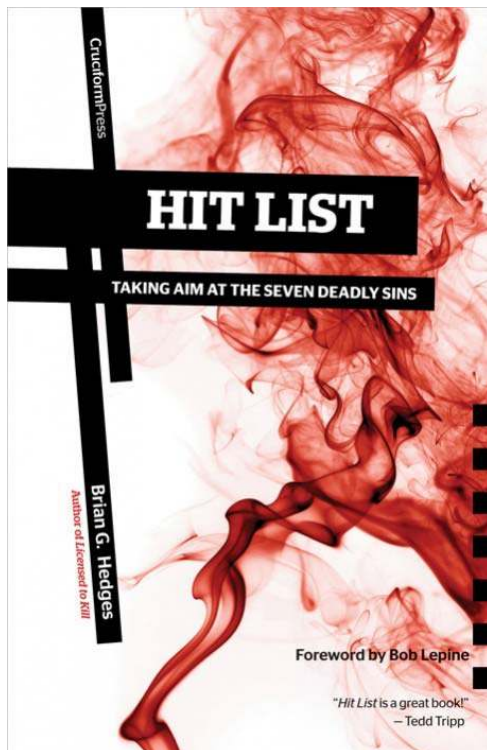
Secondly, there is no fluff in this book. Every page contains hard hitting, informative, and useful information. After reading what Hedges has to say, the reader will have received a history lesson on the seven deadly sins, a primer on what each sin is all about, why we should avoid those sins at all costs, and what Scripture says we are to do about these particular sins. For instance, in the case of sloth, Hedges aptly states, “As an untilled field lying fallow becomes a seedbed for a wild crop of weeds, so a slothful heart becomes fertile ground for vice.” I would submit that most believe slothfulness only applies to lazy people, those who sit on the couch and watch television all day long. Hedges

smashes that incorrect perception, declaring “sloth is dangerous because it stunts our growth in Christ—so much so, in fact, that were it not for God’s preserving and sanctifying grace, it could actually cause us to quit and thus fall away from faith in Christ. Make no mistake; sloth can do real and serious harm to your faith.” This means that all of us have to do war with this particular sin of physical and spiritual laziness.

I highly recommend this book for all believers. As Christians, we are called to do battle with sin—this is what the Puritans called “mortifying sin”. If you are truly serious about dealing with sin in your life, I recommend you read this book and apply the sound biblical truths that Hedges shares. As noted by one of the endorsers of this book, outside of John Owen’s thoughts on the mortification of sin, Hedges’ book is a clarion call for the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to cut to the root of sin in your life. Give this a book a read as soon as possible!

***Hit List: Taking Aim at the Seven Deadly Sins* - Author Interview with Brian Hedges**

By Dave Jenkins



Brian G. Hedges is the lead pastor for Fulkerson Park Baptist Church in Niles Michigan, and the author of *Christ Formed in You: The Power of the Gospel for Personal Change*, *Licensed to Kill: A Field Manual for Mortifying Sin*, and *Active Spirituality: Grace and Effort in the Christian Life*. Brian has also written for *The Gospel Coalition*, *Christianity.com*, *PastorConnect*, and *Servants of Grace*, and blogs at www.brianghedges.com. You can follow him on Twitter @brianghedges. Brian and his wife, Holly, have four children.

T4L: What is *Hit List* about?

Brian Hedges: *Hit List* is about sin and grace, brokenness and redemption, vice and virtue. It is a collection of detailed dossiers on seven of our most lethal enemies—those vices traditionally known as “The Seven Deadly Sins”—namely: pride, envy, wrath, sloth, greed, gluttony, and lust. But the goal of this book isn’t just to see our sins more clearly, or even to repent from them, but to experience the

transforming power of Christ and his Spirit in our lives.

T4L: This is your second book with Cruciform Press. What’s the relationship to your previous book with Cruciform, *Licensed to Kill*?

Brian: *Licensed to Kill* is subtitled “A Field Manual for Mortifying Sin.” My purpose in that book was to give detailed help on how to kill any sin. *Hit List*, written as something of a sequel, builds on the general principles in *Licensed to Kill*, but with the aim of attacking the specific sins themselves.

T4L: You acknowledge in the book that the seven deadly sins aren’t an explicitly

biblical list, but you've still written a book on it. Why?

Brian: The origin of this list is almost 1500 years old, and has been used by Christians of all stripes for helping them understand the nature of sin. Some of the early theologians called these “capital sins”—the word “*capital*” coming from *caput*, the Latin word for “head”. They viewed these sins not as the worst sins, but as the “head” sins, or root sins: the leading, breeding sins, which produced all the others. The idea was that you could never deal with the fruits of other sins unless you addressed these root sins. And while this specific list of seven sins is not given in Scripture, the idea of root sins certainly is, and a good case can be made from Scripture for seeing these seven sins as root sins—or to use Dorothy Sayers’ phrase, as “the Seven Roots of Sinfulness.”

Another reason I’ve written the book is because studying the history of the seven deadly sins has helped me personally. It started several years ago when I first began realizing my own propensity to the sin of *acedia*—the older designation for “sloth”. Sloth, in ancient Christian spirituality, wasn’t just laziness, though that could be a symptom. It was an inward spiritual resistance to God, what Dante called *lento amore*, slow love. My interest in understanding this particular vice led me into a study of the other deadly sins as well. And then I began to see just how influential the list has been not only in theology, but also in literature and in popular culture. All of that led to writing this book.

T4L: One of the rubrics you use for explaining these sins is “disordered love”. Can you say more about that?

Brian: Augustine, who believed that sin was the result of wrongly ordered love and desire, developed this concept. Augustine said, “living a just and holy life requires one...to love things ...in the right order, so that you do not love what is not to be loved, or fail to love what is to be loved, or have a greater love for what should be loved less, or an equal love for things that should be loved less or more, or a lesser or greater love for things that should be loved equally...” (*De Doctrina Christiana*, Book 1).

The idea, in other words, is that there is a proper order to our loves, with God obviously deserving our highest love, and that we flourish as human beings only when that order is observed. The roots of this are clearly in Scripture; for example, in Jesus’ teaching on the two greatest commandments (Matt. 22:37-40), and the New Testament’s frequent use of the word *epithumia*, which means inordinate desire.

I find it helpful because (1) it affirms the legitimacy of our human longing for happiness, but teaches us to relocate our happiness in God; and (2) it affirms the inherent goodness of created things, such as food and sex, while reminding us to keep our desires for these things ordered under the Lordship of Christ. Sin results when we seek our joy in created things, rather than the Creator (this is the essence *idolatry*) and when we fail to observe God’s revealed will in how we use these lesser goods. But the practical solution to such sin is not asceticism—severe bodily self-denial—but the reordering of our desires, such that we embrace all created goods in their proper order.

T4L: What do you hope lay Christians get out of the book?

Brian: I hope they will get both practical help and gospel hope. Practical help, in understanding their own hearts and their propensities to specific sins. And gospel hope, in seeing afresh the riches of God's grace, the redemptive power of Christ, and the transforming ministry of the Spirit. I also think believers can be helped by recovering a basic understanding of this list

"The way to fight sin is not *merely* with spiritual disciplines, as important as these are, but with a strong dose of justification by **faith alone** and the transforming ministry of the **Holy Spirit**."

of seven sins. I regularly use the list in confession by simply praying through the list and asking the Lord to show me where these sins are evident in my life. We all need help in self-examination, so perhaps others would benefit from this as well.

T4L: What advice would you give to pastors on preaching the seven deadly sins?

Brian: I would suggest three things:

First, be biblical: if you preach on these sins, be sure to expound what Scripture actually says about each one. Because there is such a wealth of material written about these sins, it would be tempting to build sermons on that material rather than Scripture. I think we have to resist that temptation, start with the text of Scripture, and then judiciously use the other material to help with illustration and application. But as expositors, we must let the text itself speak.

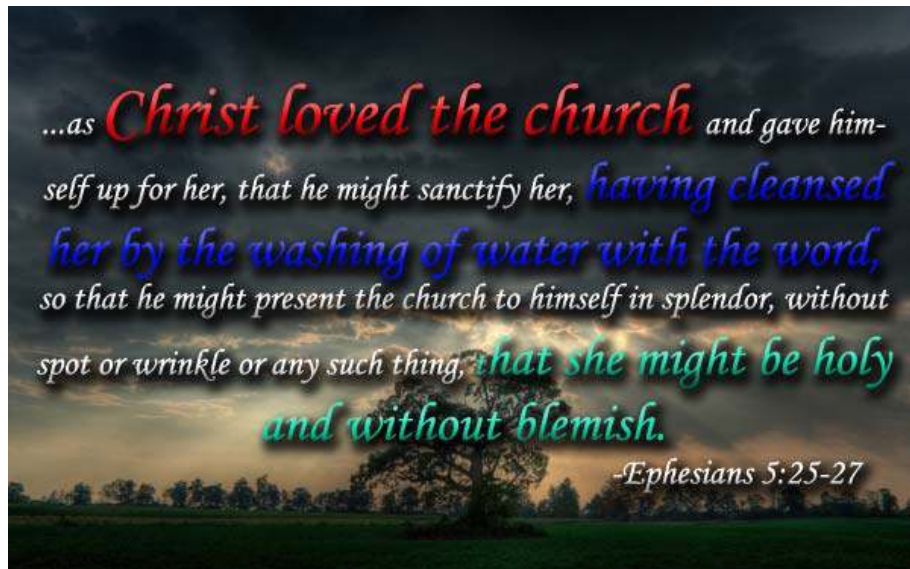
Second, be practical: teaching on these sins is a great opportunity to talk about the nitty-gritty ways in which we sin and to offer practical help in "putting off" and "putting on."

Third, point people to Jesus: teaching on sin that fails to hold out gospel hope is nothing more than moralism. One of the weaknesses of the monastic and medieval writing on the seven deadly sins is that they spend a lot more time in diagnosis than cure, and the remedies they do suggest sometimes fall short of the full-blooded gospel. The way to fight sin is not *merely* with spiritual disciplines, as important as these are, but with a strong dose of justification by faith alone and the transforming ministry of the Holy Spirit.

T4L: Thanks for your time today, Brian. I [Dave] truly enjoyed reading your book and interviewing you today about it.

Growing in Holiness: Clarifying the Often-Misunderstood Doctrine of Sanctification

By Brian H. Cosby



The doctrine of sanctification is at the center of one of the most heated debates in evangelical circles today. Many are confused over *how* we are made holy. Is it God's work or ours? In the following discussion, I want to clarify this often-misunderstood doctrine and provide some helpful principles.

I define sanctification as *the progressive process by which God makes believers holy*. From our position as God's adopted children, we're called to be holy. To be sure, the pursuit of holiness is *only* possible because we are positionally holy in Christ. We have been declared holy (definitive sanctification) and are being made holy (progressive sanctification). Unbelievers cannot please God. I realize that this is offensive, but unbelievers cannot be obedient or holy. Paul writes in Romans 8:8, "Those who are in the flesh cannot please God." The writer of Hebrews concurs, "Without faith, it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6). But as God's children, we not only have the *possibility* of pleasing God, but the *certainty* of pleasing God.

What is Holiness?

The word “*holiness*” (and its various forms) occurs over 700 times in the Bible. It’s most basic meaning is “to be set apart,” but it also has a secondary meaning, “to be pure.” Israel was called “a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). God revealed to Israel, “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth” (Deut. 7:6).

Peter tells the New Testament church, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). The New Testament writers call Christians *saints*, literally “holy ones” (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 13:13; Eph. 1:15; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; 1 Thess. 3:13; 1 Tim. 5:10; Heb. 13:24; Jude 1:3). Holiness is not mere rule keeping (i.e., the Pharisees). Holiness is something God creates in us as we live in obedience to Him by faith. We have been declared righteous in Christ by faith (justification) and are progressively being made holy in Christ by faith (sanctification).

In 1 Peter 1:16, Peter quotes from Leviticus 11:44—“You shall be holy, for I am holy”—reinforcing the Old Testament principle for New Testament believers. God makes the holiness of His own nature the ground of His demand of holiness in His people. We were created in the image of God to be holy as He is holy. But the Fall shattered that image, leaving us under the power and penalty of sin. The eternal Holy God became man in the per-

son of Jesus to initiate and re-create us in His image.

Three Principles of Sanctification

I’d like to give you three principles of growing in holiness to understand how we are sanctified. I’ll provide each principle with some biblical and pastoral support. First, holiness is God’s purpose for you as a believer and goal for the church, which is the bride of Christ.

Ephesians 1:4 – “Even as [God] chose us in him before the foundation of the world, *that we should be holy and blameless* before him.”

“It would be a big mistake to think about justification is all about God and sanctification...He is the One making us holy..”

Ephesians 5:25-27– “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.”

Second, sanctification is *the work of God alone*.

Westminster Shorter

Catechism – “Sanctification is

the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and to live unto righteousness" (Q. 35).

Hebrews 6:1-3 – "Let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity....And this we will do, *if God permits*" (emphasis added).

1 Corinthians 15:10 – "By the grace of God, I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, *though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me*" (emphasis added).

Galatians 2:20 – "I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God."

Hebrews 13:20-21 – "May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, *working in us that which is pleasing in his sight,* through Jesus Christ" (emphasis added).

Philippians 1:6 – "He who began a good work in you will carry it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

Bryan Chapell – "Holiness is not so much a matter of what we achieve as it is the grace our God provides."

A. W. Pink – "God himself is the alone source and spring of all holiness....Sanctification, then, is the immediate work and gift of God himself."

Kevin DeYoung – "It would be a big mistake to think that justification is all about God and sanctification is all about us....God is the agent in our sanctification...He is the One making us holy."

John Flavel – "Question: 'Who is the Author of sanctification?' Answer: 'God only.'"

J. V. Fesko – "Christ through the Spirit sanctifies and conforms the believer to his holy image; the believer does not sanctify himself through his own obedience."

Walter Marshall – "All our good works, and living to God, are not by our own power or strength at all, but by the power of Christ, living in us by faith; and that God enableth us to act, not merely according to our natural power...but above our own power, by Christ united to us, and in us through the Spirit."

Third, while the work of sanctification is of God alone, He uses various means to

sanctify and we put forth real and sincere effort to grow by His grace.

2 Corinthians 7:1 – “Let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God.”

Hebrews 12:14 – “Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.”

Philippians 2:12 – “Work out your salvation with fear and trembling...”

2 Peter 1:10 – “Be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.”

James 2:17 – “So faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”

The countless exhortations to live holy lives before God and to flee sin; the “putting off” of sin and “putting on” of righteousness.

John Piper – “Let us declare untiringly the good news that our justification is based on the worth of Christ’s obedience and sacrifice, not ours. But let us also declare the biblical truth that the enjoyment of that justification in its effect on our joy and confidence and power to grow in likeness to Jesus is conditioned on our actively forsaking sins and forsaking bad habits and mortifying lusts and pursuing intimacy with Christ, and not grieving the Spirit.”

John Piper (Cont’d) – “God is wholly engaged in bringing your life and this world to its appointed destiny of holiness. And this full engagement of God in the process of your sanctification is no limitation on your engagement, but is in fact the creation of your engagement.

He works the miracle of sanctification; you act the miracle. He produces it; you perform it. And if you don’t use your will to act the miracle, there is no miracle. God’s sovereign enablement of holiness does not contradict the act of duty, it creates it.”

“God’s work begun in us should give us great confidence that it will one day be completed .”

J. I. Packer – “In sanctification, the Holy Spirit ‘works in you to will and to act’ according to God’s purpose; what he does is prompt you to work out your salvation....Sanctification [then]...is an ongoing cooperative process in which regenerate persons, alive to God and freed from sin’s dominion, are required to exert themselves in sustained obedience.”

Louis Berkhof – “While [sanctification] is very decidedly a supernatural work of God, the believer can and should co-operate in it by a diligent use

of the means that God has placed at his disposal.”

John Murray – “We do not sanctify ourselves. It is God who sanctifies. We must not forget, of course, that our activity is enlisted to the fullest extent in the process of sanctification.”

Wayne Grudem – “It is specifically God the Holy Spirit who works within us to change us and sanctify us, giving us greater holiness of life....[But] we continue to grow both in our passive trust in God to sanctify us and in our active striving for holiness and greater obedience in our lives.”

John Calvin – [The pursuit of holiness is] “a work arduous and of immense labor... [God] bids us to strive and make every effort for this purpose.”

This raises a question, “What are the purposes of God’s laws?” Not only are God’s laws designed (1) to restrain evil and (2) show us how sinful we are, they also (3) show us what’s pleasing to God. They “equip us for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:17). Our “delight is in the law of the Lord” (Ps. 1:2). “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul” (Ps. 19:7). “I find my delight in your commandments” (Ps. 119:47). “Now we know that the law is good.” (1 Tim. 1:8). “His commandments, are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3)

But here’s the good news:

The cross of Christ has removed the condemnation of the law, so now God’s law leads us like a friend, showing us those

things that are pleasing to God. Moreover, Jesus has accomplished for you everything God has required of you in the law, so that we’ve been freed to love and obey God’s commandments. That God alone is the One who sanctifies us should make us all the more dependent, thankful, and hopeful. God’s work begun in us should give us great confidence that it will one day be completed! We are called to be holy and obedience, as His beloved children. He delights in us and has given us His law as a friend to guide us in the ways that please Him. And it is *all* by grace.

As Jerry Bridges once said, “Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the *reach* of God’s grace; and your best days are never so good that you are beyond the *need* of God’s grace.” As branches, we are to abide in the vine, Jesus Christ. Jesus says (John 15:4-5), “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him; he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.” Let us abide in Christ by treasuring Him above all else, by availing ourselves to the means of growing in His grace—Word, prayer, sacrament, worship, service, and gospel community—and by trusting His Spirit to complete the work already begun in you.

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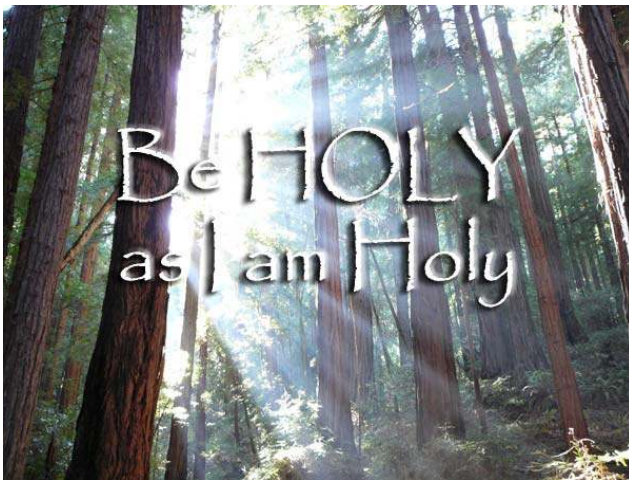
Redemption Accomplished and Applied, 146-147.

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Calvin’s Commentary on 1 Peter 1:5

Set Apart for God: Living a Holy Life

By Sarah Jenkins



Imagine that your wife took a trip to visit with her parents, and after a few weeks you go to her parents' house to pick her up. You arrive at her father's house and he is very accommodating and asks you to stay with them for a few days before you return home. You decide to take him up on his offer, but eventually you and your wife begin your journey home. Your journey is a long one since you are several days away from your home. You stop in a few cities along the way, one of which is a very large metropolitan.

You try to find a place to stay, but there are no rooms available at any of the hotels. You decide to sleep in the car in a

Wal-Mart parking lot. Although you're not familiar with this particular city, you worry about being outside overnight. As you're getting settled for sleep, an employee of the store comes out and asks you what you're doing. You tell him that all the hotels are full and there's no place to stay. He says to you, "You are more than welcome to come to my house, only don't stay here."

You decide it is the better of the two options and follow him to his house. He gives you and your wife some dinner. Just as you are about to go to bed in one of his guest rooms, there is a loud knock on the door. Your host opens the door and outside stands a large group of gangsters with guns. They demand that your host—this guy you just met—send *you* out there so they can "have their way

with you." Your host is horrified and says,

"Soon you get calls from the governor, senators, congressmen, the President of the United States—every single one of them is appalled at this travesty...."

"No! Do not do this evil thing, I beg you!" But these men insist and start threatening. Finally your host says, "Here take my

virgin daughter and this man's wife and have your way with them instead!"

Since your wife is the more beautiful of the two women, they take her and start raping her in the middle of the street. You, the man (who is your host), his daughter, and all of his neighbors are too terrified of these gangsters to do anything to stop them. You can hear them "having their way" with your wife over and over again—her screams are those of a dying animal. You want to call the police, but the man explains to you that some of those men out there *are the cops!* This goes on for hours and hours as you sit by the door, inside the house, completely helpless. Eventually you fall asleep from sheer exhaustion, despite this continued mayhem.

When morning comes, you suddenly jolt awake. You remember the horror of the night before and jerk open the front door. Your wife is laying on the cement face down with her hand reaching toward the threshold. You hurriedly reach down and frantically shake her, trying to wake her. When you touch her bare skin, however, you realize that she is dead and very cold.

Overwhelmed with anger and distraught with grief, you carefully bring her inside. You decide then and there that everyone in the entire country will know what these men did to your wife. You sit down with your

laptop and begin blogging about this—you share your post with everyone on every social media site that you can. You post pictures of your wife's mutilated body on your blog for every person to see.

Soon you get calls from the governor, senators, congressmen, the President of the United States—every single one of them is appalled at this travesty and wants to help bring your wife's killers to justice. The man-hunt begins and soon almost an entire city is ripped apart. The city's population goes from hundreds of thousands down to less than one thousand in just a week. The city is used as an example to all others in the country with this message: *THIS SIN WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.*

What Does This Story Have To Do With Being Set Apart?

About three-thousand years ago, a scenario almost exactly like the one above occurred in Gibeah (in the area of Benjamin). Instead of blogging about it, the husband of this murdered woman cut her into twelve pieces and sent her parts to each of the tribes of Israel. This event nearly wiped the tribe of Benjamin from the face of the earth, but God remembered His promises and spared the lives of a few Benjamites for posterity's sake. The last verse in Judges, chapter 21—where this story is found—states: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit."

It was because of this terrible sin that the tribe of Benjamin (nearly every man, woman, and child) was practically exterminated. If not for the promises of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this group of people would no longer be in existence today. The Lord had called His people to be set apart—to be *Holy*—a light to the nations around them. He had instructed them to follow His (ten) commandments—including “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” Holiness has been the calling of God’s people since the beginning of time.

The story of the Benjamites may seem (for one) quite a bit extreme. One might ask, “Why should (almost) an entire tribe be killed over the sins of only a few?” The truth is, it wasn’t just ‘a few’.

“Israel’s repentance, however, comes with a steep price.”

They had fallen into idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, murder, etc. Everyone did what was right in his/her own eyes.

In Leviticus 20:26, the Lord says to the people of Israel, “Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.” In a world filled with sin, however, these people (God’s Chosen) could not stay pure. Continually throughout the Old

Testament we see example after example of Israel’s fall back into sin and away from God.

In Ezra 9-10, the prophet describes the horrible crimes against God’s holiness

that he witnesses in the city of Jerusalem (not far from Gibeah, in the state of Benjamin). In verses 1-4 of chapter 9, Ezra recounts, “After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, “The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness.” When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice.”

The Lord’s people had not been keeping the Sabbath, had not been listening to the Law read aloud, had not been keeping the Commandments, or worshipping the One True God. Even the Levites—priests of the Most High God—had

completely fallen into sin. Ezra knew that only a radical act of obedience would ever make things right. Ezra, in his terrible grief over the sins of his people, cries out to the Lord and prays for mercy. He confesses the sins of the people and suddenly those around him are drawn in. They begin to weep bitterly and ask God for forgiveness for taking foreign wives, having foreign children, and worshipping foreign gods.

Israel's repentance, however, comes with a steep price. In order to become right before the Lord, the men of Israel are required to "put away" their foreign wives and children. And so they do. Families all over the nation are torn apart as all of the non-Israelites are sent out of the land. Women and children left without husbands or fathers. But because of this revival, a great time of blessing came to God's Chosen People. The wall was built around Jerusalem and the nation was united again. Once again, God remembered His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

An Even Greater Sacrifice

Israel as a people and nation experienced many terrible and wonderful things because of their obedience (or lack of) to God. Eventually, the Lord sent His Promised One to remove the blood debt that hung over all of humanity. Since the Fall, man has continually turned his back on God and His Commandments. And God was right to punish him for this, be-

cause of His holiness. The Lord, however, had a plan for redemption in place—a way for mankind to once again become righteous before a Perfect God.

The Gospel of Luke tells the story of Jesus' holy birth in a small town called Bethlehem, not far from Gibeah. Once again, the Benjamites were unwelcoming, leaving no room for Mary and Joseph to sleep. Once again a man and his wife are left practically outside in the elements, with not even a pillow to rest their heads on. But this story is different. Jesus is miraculously delivered and wrapped in swaddling clothes, while angels serenade Him in the Heavens above. He is worshipped and adored by shepherds and wise-men.

Babies don't stay little for long, however. It wasn't long before this Son of Man was grown. He lived a sinless life from His first cry until His last breath. He taught of righteousness and truth. He healed many and raised some from the dead. And when the leaders of that day saw that He'd won the hearts of the people, they crucified Him. But it was all the Father's plan.

You see, God knew that only a perfect sacrifice would make a way for His creation to come to Him and be made whole again. So it was on that cross, over two-thousand years ago, that Jesus was crucified, bled, and died for the sins of all mankind. This fulfilled the prophesy in

Isaiah that said, “He was pierced for our transgressions, crushed for our sins. The punishment that brought us peace was upon Him and by His wounds we are healed.”

The story doesn’t stop there, though. The Messiah was raised from death to life after three days in the grave. Because of His resurrection, death was defeated and we can have the gift of eternal life through Him. Even those who have committed the worst sin imaginable can believe in Jesus and receive His free gift of salvation.

Be Holy as Christ is Holy

Christian, God has called you to be set apart. Hebrews 10:10 says, “We have been set apart as holy because Jesus Christ did what God wanted him to do by sacrificing his body once and for all.” It is through Him that we can be holy, and only through Him can we be considered *righteous* before God. You have been called out of sin—taken from the Kingdom of Darkness into the Kingdom of God.

We must be the light—the shining city on a hill—that God has called us to be. Do you see others around you hurting and in need of Jesus? Brothers, sisters, share the Good News! Be a living example, holy and pure before God, so as to be a witness through your very life. One day we will be judged for our deeds. Let us all hope that when our day comes we will hear the Lord say to each of us, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”

Cheap and Costly Grace in Light of the High Priestly Ministry of Jesus Christ

By Dave Jenkins



Mortification is a word that not many of you have likely heard. Two concepts that appear in Christian approaches to sanctification are *mortification* and *vivification*. Building on the language and imagery of Colossians 3:9-10, the idea of mortification is understood as putting off the “old man”, and vivification was conceived as the reality of being made alive by the Spirit. These complementary ideas of sanctification require not only the shedding of sin, but also renewal in the grace of God.

The importance of mortification though cannot be overstated. To mortify is to put sin to death. Christians can kill—or mortify—their sin because of Jesus. Jesus is our High Priest, He rules, and reigns as our Intercessor. Christians struggle to kill their sin because they don’t understand the role of

“It’s no small wonder why the American Church is, by and large, anemic today.”

Jesus as their High Priest, Intercessor, and Mediator before the Father.

Jesus is a sympathetic High Priest and Intercessor (Hebrews 4:14-16). He knows everything that is going on in our lives. Nothing is hidden from view of Him who knows His people. He died in our place and for our sin. When He was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He experienced suffering on a level we will never experience. Yet, He submitted Himself to the Father and His Father's plan for Him—to die and rise on behalf of His people. Now through Him, His people have a High Priest and Intercessor who knows what they are going through. On the Cross, the full wrath of God was laid upon Jesus. Now through Christ, the righteousness of God is imputed to man, apart from good works, to those who believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, all mankind bows in humble allegiance for we find that we have met our match, and in Him we are now satisfied by His love. Jesus makes all things new. He takes our sin and imputes to man His righteousness, through which He gives man a new nature, with new desires, and affections for Himself.

Many Christians struggle to understand mortification because in the North American Church, we are so used to speaking about what we've been saved *from* that we hardly ever talk about what we've been saved *to*. When you combine this, with the idea that many Christians earnestly think that they can live however

you want, you have a recipe for a disaster. Dietrich Bonhoeffer called the idea that man can live however he/she wants cheap grace. Bonhoeffer pointed out that the grace of God is costly—it cost the Son of God His life when He bled and died a horrible awful death in our place and for our sin. Through Christ, we can put our sin to death. This is what Bonhoeffer called costly grace.

When you combine all of this with the fact that many Christians don't want to speak about sin, but only the love of God, you have a disaster. It's no small wonder why the American Church is, by and large, anemic today. We have such a low view of sin that when we read Paul's words in Romans 6:1, "May it never be!" in reference to living however we want, we don't hear their full force. Paul's point in Romans 6:1 is to counter the idea that because we're saved by grace, we can live however we want to live. Instead, he counters by explaining our new identity in Christ is to inform our progressive growth in Christ. Progressive sanctification always goes back to positional or definitive sanctification. We don't grow past our position in Christ, we grow *into* our position in Christ. Yet, the way that we often speak about sanctification as Christians focuses only on how we're growing by grace (progressive sanctification). By not talking about what we're growing into—namely our positional standing in Christ—we encounter many problems. As Christians grow in grace, they grow in their under-

standing of their new identity, which propels their growth forward in His grace. Let's now take a look at a few ways this affects our understanding of prayer and taking responsibility for our sin.

First, understanding our new identity in Christ will affect the way we pray. Through the intercession of Christ, He lives to plead the treasure of His own blood for His people. Our Lord is not dead and defeated. He is alive and empowers His people through the resurrection to live new lives. Furthermore, He empowers them to be His witnesses, by His grace, for His glory. When we witness for Christ, we witness not from our progressive growth in Him, but from our new identity in Him. Understanding our new identity in Christ affects not only our putting sin to death, but every facet of our ministry for Jesus.

Secondly, understanding our new identity will mean we no longer play games or excuse our sin, but rather take responsibility for it. Many Christians think they can live however they want, which is why pornography, adultery, and divorce are such big issues in the Church. Rather than stepping out into the light and living from their new identity in Christ, many Christians live like Adam in the Garden, hiding in shame and nakedness. The thing about Adam, however, is that he wasn't allowed to live in shame and guilt for his entire life, since God called him out and asked, "Where are you?" in Genesis 3:9-11. If we're truly

born again we will desire to come out of the shadows by embracing our new identity in Christ. Furthermore, the Lord will discipline us if we decide to live however we want. Christ died in the place of sinners for their sin, so now they would no longer be under the dominion of sin, but instead by grace fueled obedience, daily slay sin through the help of the Holy Spirit, who intercedes for them in times of need.

We live in church culture where it is often overemphasized is that one needs to get saved. There is nothing wrong with calling people to salvation through Christ. Yet, Christians (whether young or old in the faith) need to be told that now, because they are saved, they are to put to death their sin and live from their new identity in Christ (Romans 6). This also includes not living however one wishes, but rather in *obedience* to God's Word. This means that you must decide if you

will "go
and sin
no
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as Jesus
instruct-
ed the
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"Notice, though, that he [Paul] doesn't say they are *perfect*."

caught in adultery (John 8), or if you will continue on in sin. Although we must recognize that we all have indwelling sin, we are also called to live in righteousness. None of God's people will be perfected until the day when the Lord Jesus clothes us

completely in the righteousness of Christ. This is why theologians speak about the already and not yet of salvation. Since we have a new identity in Christ, Christians are to daily kill their sin and grow in Christ until the day they die, and are glorified.

Christians are saints, not yet perfected. Christians are saints because they have the righteousness of Christ imputed to them by faith in Him (positionally holy). Through Christ, Christians are as adorned in the perfection of Christ as they can be here on earth, while they wrestle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. This is also why the Christian is to engage in spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6). At the heart of mortifying the flesh is the idea that they are putting their sin to death. The Christian who shows no semblance of repentance in his/her life shows that he/she has serious doctrinal deficiencies.

One day, Christians will be thoroughly clothed in the righteous robes of Christ. That day is not yet, as long as we remain here on Earth. We will face hardship, persecution, and difficulty—after all, the Lord told His people that we would, in John chapters 15-16. The Lord also uses the good and difficulty of His people's lives to refine and mold them into His image and likeness. This is why our actions matter—if we behave as though the things we do have no consequences, what we are really saying is that we don't believe the gospel, which is the power of God. God will bring His elect to glorification. Every-

thing God does in the life of His people is to bring forth a pure and holy bride to the Lord Jesus. There is no fault on the side of the Lord Jesus for the lack of sanctification in the lives of His people, since He lives to make intercession for them. The entire responsibility lies in the individual Christian for failing to repent of sin, and turning a deaf ear to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. This is why many Christians are deceived (1st John 1). In their delusion, they think all is well with their soul; they attend church every Sunday, pray and sing songs, even attend a mid-week bible study. They go home from church and yell at their spouses. They look at pornography during the week, lusting after every girl on every magazine cover, looking at every inappropriate image on social media, and thinking, "Wow my life would be so much better if I had that attractive spouse [car, house, job, etc.]" The lust and greed for more is so rampant in our culture that many have become desensitized to it. The sad truth is that those thinking this way have no understanding of holiness because they have a tiny gospel of their own making. Beware lest you fall into this trap! Those who fall into it don't even understand that they're under divine discipline, which is why they're so discouraged and struggling day-to-day.

There is good news, however, for sinner-saints. When Paul addressed the Corinthians in the opening of his letter in 1 Corinthians, he called them saints. Now keep in mind, these were people who were

living however they wanted, to such a degree that word of their actions had spread far and wide. They were truly messed up, and yet Paul called them *saints*. Notice, though, that he doesn't say they are *perfect*. Paul writes to correct them on how they are living because they were not living out the gospel before a watching and waiting world. This is why Paul wrote Corinthians to correct them on church governance, spiritual gifts, biblical manhood, biblical womanhood, and biblical sexuality, among other topics. The Lord desires to do the same in the life of His Church today. The book of Corinthians can also be applied as a rebuke to much of North American Church body, with its lax attitude towards sin and its low view of doctrine. 1st Corinthians may be one of the best letters for contemporary Christians to read and study, because it's there that we're confronted with matters that we're all dealing with—especially *biblical sexuality*.

Throughout this article, I've written as one who is deeply concerned and saddened by the state of the Church and who is concerned about the eternal state of many professing Christians. It's not enough to say, "I'm a Christian", since words alone prove nothing. The question remains: Is there enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian? Can people truly see Christ being formed in you? No man can judge your heart and whether you're saved or not, but your life can and does testify against your profession. This

is why your profession must be matched by your possession of faith in your daily life. If you don't believe me, read 1st John—a letter the Apostle John wrote to deal with this very issue. The Apostle John writes to confront us with hard truths: we cannot live however we want, and our actions have consequences. The Book of Hebrews uses warnings to warn Christians about falling away. Does the writer of Hebrews use these warnings because Christians have fallen away? No, he uses warnings because the writer wants his readers to heed the warnings and examine their hearts in light of what Christ has done in their lives. This is precisely what I want for you, as well. I want you to examine your life in light of Christ and His commands. After all, Christ has called His people to be *holy*. The holiness of God is to reshape our lives as Christians, as stated in 1st Peter 1:13-17. The Christian is being remade into the image of God's holiness and likeness through Christ. The reflection of God in man that was marred by the Fall is being restored through the finished work of Christ. Now, through the blood of Christ, the Christian is to put sin to death, by the grace of God.

Conrad Mbewe, a well-known African Pastor considered by many as the 'Spurgeon of Africa', at the recent Desiring God Pastors conference, said: "We deserve death, wrath, and hell forever. Jesus took our liability, and God crushed him. Jesus drank our hell." John Piper, at the same conference, said the following, "At the very

“God’s work begun in us should give us great confidence that it will one day be completed .”

center of our deliverance from sin is the slaughter of the Son of God." And this goes hand-in-hand with the statement from Jonathan Edwards: "A true love of God must begin with a delight in his holiness." The above quotes articulate in bite-size form what I'm trying to say in this article—namely that through Christ, the Christian can slay the dragon of sin.

Don't' make excuses, instead refuse to hide in the darkness any longer. Instead, come out of hiding your guilt and shame. Even Adam had to come out of hiding at the command of the Lord God. God, through His Word, calls man to come out of darkness and into the Light for this very reason—God wants His people to be holy and happy. He wants us to utilize the means of grace that He has given, which is fueled by the mercy of His sacrifice on the Cross. The grace of God provides the fuel by which we grow and go in the Christian life. God calls His people to exercise grace-filled effort in the pursuit of Himself. This He does through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit.

So the next time you think you can live however you want—think again! Heed Paul’s teaching in Romans 6:1, “May it never be!” You were bought by the blood of the Son of God. Now, because of Him, put your sin to death and live in the righteousness of God. What God commands of us, He will also supply us to fulfill. His grace is true and real! He hasn’t left you and He hasn’t forsaken you! Instead He has supplied you with everything you need to live a holy life in light of the cross and resurrection of Christ. So now, because of His grace, live for Him. Slay the dragon of sin in your life—take every thought and action captive. Christian, you are no longer under the dominion of sin, so

Christus Victor

By Craig Hurst



The doctrine of the atonement is one of the most fundamental, rich, and yet complex doctrines in the Bible. It is at the core of the gospel message. It is a major theme of the Old Testament as seen in the sacrificial system; it is accomplished in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as seen in the gospels; and it is a central theme of the rest of the epistles of the New Testament, namely the letters of Paul. It is truly a whole Bible doctrine from the promise in Genesis 3:15 that God would send someone who would crush the head of the serpent, to Revelation 19-20, when God will finish off all

who oppose Him before He ushers in the new Heaven and Earth at the Glorious Appearing of Christ. Additionally, it touches on many different doctrines, such as the doctrine of God, Christ, salvation, man, and even eschatology. While there are various views on what the Bible teaches about the atonement, this article will deal specifically with the *Christus Victor* concept. Before we get to that there are a few things we must address first.

What is *Christus Victor*?

Simply put, the doctrine of the atonement addresses how God handles the separateness of man from Himself because of sin. Atonement means to be at one with something. In the context of Christian theology, it means to be at one with God. Because of sin man was alienated from God. The peace of the Garden of Eden was broken and *shalom* was no more. Man was no longer at one with his Maker—he was separated. The atonement addresses God, man, sin, evil, and Satan.

Through the work of Christ, the atonement is the way in which God restores peace with man and the world. It is how God removes the separation that man's sin placed between him and God. Because of sin man is separate from God,

but because of the atonement, man is brought near to God once again. Because of sin man is at war with God, but because of the atonement man is at peace with God once again. It is because of sin that man is unacceptable to God, but because of the atonement man is acceptable

“Man is not only given a moral example in the cross of Jesus Christ, but this example compels man to reflect it in his own life by loving others.”

issues and more.

Locating *Christus Victor* Within the Various Views

As with all doctrines there are various views, or theories, of the atonement. These theories represent the various ways in which Christians over the centuries have tried to capture the Bible’s teaching on the nature of the atonement. Before we hone in on the *Christus Victor* theory of the atonement it is wise to acknowledge that, while one theory may be more comprehensive than others, each theory does capture some truth that the Bible teaches about the atonement. No one theory does, or can, capture all of the Biblical truth regarding the atonement.

With that in mind, let us briefly examine a few of the major theories of the atonement so we can better understand what *Christus Victor* is trying to capture. Perhaps the most popular theory of the atonement is the *penal substitution* view. This view, as popularized, namely, by the Reformers, focuses on the fact that “Jesus’

death bears God’s wrath against out sin (i.e., it is penal) and Jesus dies in our place (i.e., it is a substitution).” Today, this is both the most popular and the most widely attacked view among Christians. This view sees Jesus’ death as a sacrifice for our sins who took our place on the cross as a representative. If we were to picture the four points on a cross, the penal substitution view would be at the top with God whose wrath is appeased by Jesus’ death on the cross.

Another popular theory held by many liberal scholars is the *moral influence* theory. Instead of focusing on the atonement’s effect on man’s relationship with God, this view focuses on how the atonement affects man. It “emphasizes the importance of the effect of Christ’s cross on the sinner. When we look at the cross we see the greatness of divine love, which delivers us from fear and kindles in us an answering love. We respond to love with love and no longer live in selfishness and sin.” Man is not only given a moral example in the cross of Jesus Christ, but this example compels man to reflect it in his own life by loving others.

If the penal view addresses God and the cross, and the moral view addresses man and the cross, then *Christus Victor* addresses death, evil, Satan, and the cross. Going back to the four points on the cross, this view aims at the bottom of the cross. In short, this view says that the cross was an act of victory by Jesus over the powers of death, evil, and the devil. Michael Horton describes it as Jesus crushing “the serpent’s head – as was foreshadowed in his victory over the demons, sickness, and death – during his earthly ministry. Neither Satan nor Caesar is Lord.”

Not to confuse the reader here it is worthy to note, however, that the *Christus Victor* theory is an offshoot of the *ransom* theory. The “ransom theory” proposes that Jesus paid a ransom to the devil for His people. This theory was originated by Origen and later held by men like Chrysostom and Augustine. Essentially, Satan owned fallen man and Jesus’ death paid the ransom to Satan for their freedom. Not only was Jesus’ death a ransom to the Devil, but it simultaneously conquered the Devil in doing so. Death did not defeat Christ in the grave. While this theory was a dominant view by a broad array of theologians, it eventually fell to the wayside for other theories. The *Christus Victor* theory became an offshoot and addressed the conquering over the devil aspect of the atonement.

Rooting *Christus Victor* in Scripture

If any Christian is to seriously consider affirming a particular theory of the atonement then it is important for that theory to be first grounded in Scripture itself. We will briefly consider the following passages: Genesis 3:15, 1st Corinthians 15:54-57, Colossians 2:13-15, and Revelation 19-20.

Genesis 3:15

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

In the third chapter of the Bible we find the basis of tension between God’s people and those who are against Him. Later, in the New Testament, John will describe those caught in this tension as “children of God” and “children of the devil”. (1st John 3:10) From the struggle between Cain and Able to the events in Revelation, the seed of rebellion in Satan and the seed of redemption in Christ span the entirety of the biblical storyline. Sin brought a tension into the world that was not supposed to be.

At the same time this tension is announced, there is a promise given that will end this tension one day. This passage is referred to as the *Protoevangelium*

“But from the fathomless wealth of his grace, God announced the future redemptive sufferings of the Messiah and the defeat of Satan.”

because it is considered to be the first mention of the gospel—the good news that God the Father, through the accomplished work of Christ and the application of the Spirit, will redeem the world from the fallen state it brought upon itself through its sin against God. While God could have left man in his fallen separate condition, He did not. Bruce Demarest reminds us that, “The holy God justly could have consigned the human race to eternal perdition. But from the fathomless wealth of his grace, God announced the future redemptive sufferings of the Messiah and the defeat of Satan. This gracious announcement in the third chapter of the

Bible constitutes the basis of all God's merciful dealings with his people."

Right on the heels of sin's entrance into the world, God began the working out of redemption in time. Rebellion was met with grace. Mercy was offered instead of earned punishment for all. Through the seed of Christ, God would overcome all attempts by the seed of Satan to destroy His people. Praise be to God!

1st Corinthians 15:54-57

"When the perishable puts on the imperishable and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of death is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

There are a few things we can see in this passage that show support for *Christus Victor*. First, it should be obvious to those familiar with this passage that, since 1st Corinthians 15 is a classic resurrection passage, the atonement is linked to resurrection and therefore eschatology. Since Christ was the first fruits of the resurrection, believers can and will follow suit at the resurrection of the saints. Though we have perishable and mortal bodies now, we will have imperishable and immortal bodies in eternity. This is possible because of Christ.

Second, Christ's sacrifice was accepted by the Father and so He brought Him back to life from the grave. Jesus conquered death! Having lived the perfect life, He was the only acceptable sacrifice on our behalf to pay the penalty for our sin. While Satan may have thought He had Christ defeated when Jesus was dead for three days, he soon realized he was wrong. Death had no victory over Christ and it will have no victory of those who put their faith in Christ as Saviour. The sting of death will not last forever for those who died in Christ before He returns. The questions Paul asks of death are rhetorical and have an obvious answer—they can do nothing. David Garland notes, "The rhetorical questions now sneer defiantly at death's impotence before the power and mercy of God, who wills to forgive sins and to raise the dead."

Finally, it is because of and through Christ that believers have victory over the sting of sin—death. There is nothing we have done, or could do, that can overcome the power of death. Paul says, "Thanks be to God!" for providing Christ the Righteous One to overcome death on our behalf. God's provision of Christ as our victory over the power of death, evil, and the devil should draw us to daily praise and thanks!

Colossians 2:13-15

“And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, 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 and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

Before we get into the *Christus Victor* aspects of this passage, observant readers will notice that this passage also supports the point made in the penal substitution view of the atonement. In the atonement, Christ paid our legal debt to God and it was cancelled—considered paid.

Regarding *Christus Victor*, verse 15 gives us more insight into what Christ accomplished on the cross. “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” While God did establish earthly rulers to rule over mankind (Rom. 13), it is clear that many times they do not bring justice to the world. Further, these very rulers and authorities often rebel against God while they carry out their divine appointments. Going back to 1st Corinthians 15, Paul says the same thing. Christ will reign on earth and before He hands over the kingdom to the Father, He will

destroy “every rule and every authority and power” (vs. 24).

Further, Paul reminds us again that it is through Christ that God the Father has been victorious over these powers. Before the foundations of the earth the Godhead planned redemption from all eternity (Eph. 1). This plan included the Son submitting Himself to the will of the Father to offer Himself up as the perfect sacrifice for the sins on behalf of His people. Having been accepted by the Father, the Father raised Him from the dead and in doing so was victorious over death, evil, and the devil. It is because of this that Christ will be able to sit “down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Revelation 19:19-21

“And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.”

Revelation 20:13-14

“And the sea gave up the dead who were

in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.”

In the book of Revelation we see the end of the long struggle between the two seeds in Genesis 3:15. Over the course of human history Satan has been trying to destroy and discourage God’s people. But when Christ comes again it will all end. While Satan knows this he fights in vain against God. He has already been defeated by the cross and

resurrection. Now it is time to put an end to his fury. While the kings and their armies gather to do battle against God, they are met with a force they cannot even raise a sword to. “From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron.” Grant Osborne points out that there seems to be no battle at all. “The battle is over instantly.”

“God’s work begun in us should give us great confidence that it will one day be completed .”

We can see in the passages above that Satan, Hades, and death are no match for the power of God. They do not even put up a fight. It is as if, knowing they have already been defeated, they do not even bother to raise a sword. They know it will be in vain. Their appearance of strength to the world is shown to be the thin veil of pride that it is. They have no chance against the power of God.

Finally, we can see that God’s judgment over Satan, Hades, death, and those who are of the seed of Satan is final. There is no sense that a rebellion might break out in the future. They are locked away in the lake of fire forever where they will suffer the consequences of their choice to rebel against God. The long struggle will come to an end. The victorious nature of the atonement will accomplish its final task—to lock away all that is opposed to God. And it has all been made possible through Christ!

Some Theological Conclusions

Since it is clear that the message of *Christus Victor* is grounded in Scripture, it would be wise to draw some theological conclusions that the above passages give us regarding the atonement.

First, the victorious nature of the atonement began before creation. Before sin even entered into the world and disturbed the peace man had with God, the Father was loving enough to make a way to reverse the curse of sin and the destruction of death.

Second, the victorious nature of the atonement was promised immediately after the Fall. While God did issue judgment right after the fall, He also provided salvation. This is what James Hamilton calls 'salvation through judgment'. God meets His judgment with the offer of salvation.

Third, Christ's victory over death, evil, and the devil was made possible only because of the perfect life of Christ and His work on the cross. Christ has done it all! We are to respond to Christ's work in faith and we will receive the benefits of His victory.

Finally, believers can be encouraged in the midst of their struggles in this life because “for everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world.” Because Jesus has overcome death, evil, and the devil there is nothing we need to fear. We have become victorious through Christ's victory. Our union with Christ has brought us victory over the world.

Michael F. Bird, *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2013), 402.

Michael E. Wittmer, *Don't stop Believing: Why Living Like Jesus Is Not Enough*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2008), 85-86.

L.L. Morris, "Atonement, Theories of." in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology; Second Ed.*, 117. Edited by Walter A. Elwell. Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2001.

Wittmer, *Don't Stop Believing*, 86.

Michael Horton, *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2011), 502.

Gregg Allison, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2011), 392-94.

See also the Pauline metaphor of believers being "in Christ" which puts nonbelievers "out of Christ".

Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: Foundations of Evangelical Theology, The Doctrine of Salvation*, (Wheaton, Crossway, 1997), 81.

David E. Garland, *I Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, reprint 2007), 745.

Hebrews 1:3.

Revelation 19:15.

Grant Osborne, *Revelation: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2002), 689.

I John 5:4.

Recommended Books on Sin

This month at **Servants of Grace**, we've been considering the topic of sin. We live in a time where sin is often minimized or even ignored. A right understanding of the doctrine of sin will help us to not only see ourselves rightly in light of Jesus, but also to glory in the Christ. Furthermore, understanding the doctrine of sin will strengthen our witness, since it will help Christians put to death their sin, understanding that Jesus died in the place of His people and for their sin.

Through the gracious work of the Holy Spirit, Christians are convicted of sin, empowered to make much of Jesus for the purpose of being about His mission—seeing the lost saved and disciples made. A right understanding of sin will help the Christian to see the world, not as they want, but as it really is. It will also help Christians to understand God, revelation, humanity, Christ, his saving work, the church, and eschatology. It will help us as we engage in evangelism, missions, pastoral leadership, ministry, ethics, preaching, counseling, and much more.

The following list of books reflects, in my view, the best teaching on the doctrine of sin. Some are newer and some are older. The list is provided in no particular order.

- *Thoughts for Young Men* by J.C. Ryle
- *Closing the Windows* by Tim Chester
- *Sex and the Supremacy of God* by John Piper and Justin Taylor
- CCEF Mini Books by various authors
Note: CCEF has several mini-books. From *Sexual Addiction: Freedom from Compulsive Behavior* (David Powlison) to *It's All About Me: The Problem with Masturbation* (Winston T. Smith), these books cover nearly every topic related to purity. These small booklets are an invaluable resource for any counselor.
- [Porn-Free Church \(free e-book\)](#) by [Covenant Eyes](#)
- *Respectable Sins: Confronting the Sins We Tolerate* by Jerry Bridges
- *Fallen: A Theology of Sin* Edited by Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson
- *Finally Free: Fighting For Purity with the Power of Grace* by Health Lambert
- [Overcoming Sin and Temptation: Three Classic Works](#) by John Owen
- [The Enemy Within: Straight Talk About the Power and Defeat of Sin](#) by Kris Lundgaard
- [Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices](#) by Thomas Brooks
- [The Evil of Evils: The Exceeding Sinfulness of Sin \(Puritan Writings\)](#) by Jeremiah Burroughs.
Note: This book is difficult to find a copy of this today but you can download a pdf [here](#).
- [Keeping the Heart: How to maintain your love for God](#) by John Flavel
- [The Mischief of Sin](#) by Thomas Watson

- [Sinfulness of Sin](#) by Ralph Venning
- [Sin The Greatest Evil](#) by Samuel Bolton
- [The Jerusalem Sinner Saved; or, Good News for the Vilest of Men](#) by John Bunyan
- [The Anatomy of Secret Sins](#) by Obadiah Sedgwick
- [The Mystery of Self-deceiving; Or, a Discourse and Discovery of the Deceitfulness of Man's Heart](#) by Daniel Dyke.
- [Instructions About Heart-work, and a Companion for Prayer](#) by Richard Alleine
- [A Treatise on Satan's Temptations](#) by Richard Gilpin.
- *The Anatomy of Secret Sins* by Obadiah Sedgwick
- *A Treatise on Satan's Temptations* by Richard Gilpin
- *Tempted and Tried* by Russell Moore
- *The Doctrine of Repentance* by Thomas Watson
- *The Mortification of Sin* by John Owen

I trust you'll enjoy these as much as I have. For more resources, please feel free to visit <http://theologylife.org> or <http://servantsofgrace.org>!

In Christ Alone,

Dave Jenkins

About the Authors:



Michael Boling

Michael Boling lives in Belleville, IL, a suburb of St. Louis, MO with his wife Erica, adopted daughter Alissa, two cats Molly and Sweetie Pie and horse Beckham. After spending eight years in the United States Navy as a Yeoman, he has been employed for the past ten years by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) where he oversees advanced educational programs. Michael holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Religion (Biblical Studies) from Liberty University and is currently closing in on completing a Master of Arts in Religion (Biblical Studies) from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. He is an avid reader and blogger operating the website Christian Apologetics and Intelligence Ministry (<http://intelmin.org>) which provides both original content and relevant posts and articles from around the web. Mike serves as the Managing Editor of Servants of Grace, and the editor for Servants of Grace Apologetics.



Brian Cosby

Brian Cosby (Ph.D., Australian College of Theology) is Senior Pastor of Wayside Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Signal Mountain, Tennessee, and Visiting Professor of historical theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Atlanta.



Jennifer Guo

Jennifer Guo works in accounting by day and read books by night. If she has free time and is not reading, she is probably sitting at a piano worshipping God through song. She loves ministry and serves in various capacities in church and in campus ministry at a local university. She is also part of a performing arts ministry called The LION Players.

About the Authors (Cont'd):



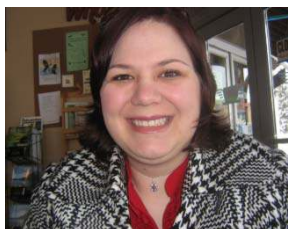
Craig Hurst

Craig Hurst is a husband, father of three, and working on bringing another child into his family through adoption. He loves to play sports and read theology of all disciplines. He attends Grace Community Church in Howard City, MI where he and his wife serve in the youth group and other areas of need. He is working on his MA in Theology at Calvary Baptist Theological Seminary in Lansdale, PA.



Dave Jenkins

Dave Jenkins is the Executive Director of [Servants of Grace Ministries](#), and the Executive Editor of [Theology for Life Magazine](#). He and his wife, Sarah, are members of Ustick Baptist Church in Boise, Idaho, where they serve in a variety of ministries. Dave received his MAR and M.Div. through Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.



Sarah Jenkins

Sarah Jenkins is a writer and musician who lives with her husband, Dave, in Caldwell, Idaho. She serves alongside him at their home church— Ustick Baptist Church in Boise, ID. Among her talents as a writer and musician, Sarah puts her knowledge of Information Technology to work for NASA. Visit her on Facebook at facebook.com/sarita0218.



Matthew Sims

Mathew Sims is the author of [A Household Gospel: Fulfilling the Great Commission in Our Homes](#) and a contributor in [Make, Mature, Multiply](#) (GCD Books). He completed over forty hours of seminary work at [Geneva Reformed Seminary](#). He also works as the managing editor at [Gospel-Centered Discipleship](#) and the project manager for the [Journal of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood](#). He is a member at Downtown Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC.

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Executive Editor: Dave Jenkins

E-mail: dave@servantsofgrace.org

Design Coordinator & Copy Editor: Sarah Jenkins

Email: sarah@servantsofgrace.org