

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT

Theory	Ransom	Moral Influence	Governmental	Penal
The End of Christ's Work	Satan; to release souls in bondage to him	Man; to influence him to moral action	Man (primarily) & God; to preserve God's moral government	God; to satisfy divine wrath for sin
Key Word	Victor	Example	Theater	Sacrifice
Problem	Souls are captive to Satan because of sin.	Men need motivation to love and live for God. God accepts men, but men don't want God.	Man is sinful and needs forgiveness.	Man is sinful by nature and by act, and is thereby under God's wrath and curse
Solution	In his death Jesus conquers death, sin, and Satan. Some interpreted Jesus' death as a payment to Satan for sinners, but Satan and hell could not hold Jesus.	Christ (in either his teaching, moral life, or example of suffering) affects man, leading him to a heart acceptable to God, to faith and repentance.	God is sovereign and as ruler may pardon as he wills. He is interested in good government, and Christ's death illustrates the punishment for sin and thus deters sin.	Jesus offered a perfect sacrifice to God to remove our guilt. His righteousness fulfills the Law's demands. He reveals God's justice and love and reconciles us to God.
Salvation		Men believe and repent, which God accepts and then extends forgiveness.	By faith men are acquitted, and motivated to denounce sin.	By faith men are united to Christ, forgiven, and justified.
Scripture Proof	Col 1:15-20	1Pe 2:19-21	Eph 1:7	2Co 5:21; Gal 3:13, Rom 3
Proponents	Early church (Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, et al) Luther, Aulén (sundry articulations of this theory exist)	Peter Abelard, Socinians, Bushnell, Coleridge, W. N. Clarke, Brian McLaren , Rob Bell	Hugo Grotius, J Bellamy, S Hopkins, Stephen West, J Edwards the Younger (Jr.), N Emmons	Anselm, Turretin, John Owen, Hodge, Strong, Warfield, Piper

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