

1981

A Study of the Atonement in the Synoptic Gospels

Luke M. Klemo

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/wes_theses



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

A STUDY OF THE ATONEMENT IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

A Graduate Research Paper
Presented to
the Faculty of the
Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Divinity

by
Luke M. Klemo
Portland, Oregon
Winter 1981

Approved.
Wayne McLain

CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Statement of the Purpose	1
B. Justification of the Study	1
C. Limitations of the Study	2
D. Statement of Procedure	3
II. GENERAL BIBLICAL (O.T. AND N.T.) BACKGROUND.	4
A. The Seriousness of Sin and Liability to Judgment	4
B. Jesus' Identification With Sinners	7
C. Forgiveness Offered.	10
D. Need for Individual Response	12
E. The Meaning of Suffering	14
F. The Cross as the Climax of the Gospel.	17
III. SPECIFIC GOSPEL THEMES RELATING TO CHRIST'S DEATH.	19
A. Jesus' Foreknowledge of His Death.	19
B. Jesus' Suffering and Death in Relation to God's Purpose.	22
C. Jesus' Death in Relation to Old Testament Scriptures	24
D. Jesus' Death as a Sacrifice.	26
E. The Theme of the Son of Man in Relation to Isaiah's Suffering Servant.	29
F. Jesus' Death as Vicarious.	31
IV. KEY TEXTS RELATING TO HIS DEATH.	33
A. The Removal of the Bridegroom Mk. 2:18 (Mt. 9:15; Lk. 5:34).	33

	Page
B. The Suffering and Rejection of the Son of Man - Mk. 8:31 (Matt. 16:21ff; Lk. 9:22); Mk. 9:31 (Mt. 17:22; Lk. 9:44); Mk. 10:33-34 (Mt. 20:18f; Lk. 18:31-32) . .	34
C. The Cup and Baptism - Mk. 10:38 (Mt. 20:22; Lk. 12:50)	37
D. The Ransom Passage - Mk. 10:45 (Mt. 20:28)	39
E. Parable of the Vineyard - Mk. 12:1-12 (Mt. 21:33-45; Lk. 20:9-18)	41
F. The Anointing of Jesus - Mk. 14:8 (Mt. 26:12).	43
G. Prophecy of Betrayal - Mk. 14:17-21 (Mt. 26:20-25; Lk. 22:14, 21-23).	44
H. The Last Supper - Mk. 14:22-25 (Mt. 26:26-29; Lk. 22:14, 21-23)	45
I. The Cry From the Cross - Mk. 15:34 (Mt. 27:46; Ps. 22:1).	49
V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	51

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Purpose

The main objective of research was to find out what Christ and the writers of the Synoptic Gospels had to say about the doctrine of atonement. In the study, specific Gospel themes, key texts, and sayings of Christ in relation to His death were examined with a view to ascertaining what importance the writers of the Synoptic Gospels attached to the death of Christ.

It was also the purpose of the study to determine whether Christ viewed His death as an atonement for the sins of the world.

B. Justification of the Study

The writer had once had a conversation with a friend in Africa. His theological views were different from those of the writer. In the course of conversation, the friend indicated that the writers of the Synoptic Gospels had no doctrine of atonement.

The friend also implied that divine forgiveness was unnecessary. To him the idea of sin and punishment seemed archaic. All a man needs to do is to think positively and adopt a realistic attitude toward life, and all will be well. The reality of sin and its consequences seemed to have no place in his thinking.

Such views are becoming more popular, especially among young educated Africans with liberal leanings. Another teaching prevalent in Africa today is that all men will be saved ultimately. It is

argued that God is love and will not condemn his children to eternal damnation. This view renders atonement superfluous and unnecessary. It was the conviction of the writer that research on the atonement would not only serve him personally, but the larger Christian community in Africa. Since it was the hope of the writer that when he returned to Africa he would teach in a Bible College, the writer felt the study was of paramount importance to his future ministry.

C. Limitations of the Study

Since it was within the purpose of the study to examine specific Gospel themes, key texts and sayings of Christ relative to atonement the Gospels received special treatment in the study. John's Gospel is said to be quite explicit on the subject of the atonement. For this reason the writer confined the research, as much as possible, to the Synoptic Gospels. However, John's Gospel was used where it helped to clarify certain issues under discussion. It was the purpose of the writer to investigate the Synoptic Gospels, so as to be sure that the Synoptic Gospels, like other New Testament writings teach the doctrine of atonement.

Atonement in the Old Testament was only referred to in background material to the actual study. The Suffering Servant of Isaiah was studied in relation to the concept of suffering in the Synoptic Gospels. The writer tried to show that Jesus viewed His suffering as a fulfillment of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah.

The many historical theories on the subject of the atonement were not considered because the writer felt those were beyond the scope of this study.

D. Statement of Procedure

It was the purpose of this study to investigate the Synoptic records to determine if they contain teaching on the doctrine of atonement. In order to do this, it was deemed necessary to give a general background of both the Old and New Testaments on the subject.

As a preparation for a study of key texts and Gospel themes, attention was given to the seriousness of sin and the liability to judgment. Christ's identification with sinners, His offer of forgiveness and the need for individual response were discussed. Also discussed were the meaning of suffering and the centrality of the cross in the Gospel story.

The purpose of the third chapter was to examine specific Gospel themes in relation to Christ's death.

In the fourth chapter, key texts pertaining to His death and sacrifice were studied with the use of Bible commentaries on the Synoptic Gospels. Each of the three Gospels were carefully studied to find out what they say about the atonement.

Throughout this study, the Bible was the primary source in trying to determine if Christ saw His life as an atonement for the sins of the world.

Chapter II

GENERAL BIBLICAL (O. T. AND N. T.) BACKGROUND

A. The Seriousness of Sin and Liability to Judgment

The word "atonement" means making peace between two estranged parties. Atonement is a "process of bringing those who are estranged into a unity."¹ The term implies reconciliation. It is a process by which obstacles to reconciliation are removed. The term has in it the idea of removing the consequences of a wrong act so that there is a restoration of the relationship between two parties. Atonement for the Christian has reference to the work of Christ which culminated at Calvary's cross.

The Old Testament term for atonement is kaphar. This word means to cover or hide. When this is used in relation to sin it means that sin has been covered and therefore atonement effected. Wiley sums up the Old Testament idea of atonement when he says; "The Old Testament idea as indicated, is that of a covering, and therefore, applies to anything which veils man's sins from God."²

Atonement is made necessary by the fact that man is estranged from God. This estrangement is brought about by sin. Man on his own

¹The New Bible Dictionary (London: Intervarsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, WC1, 1962).

²H. Orton Wiley, Introduction to Christian Theology (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1946).

is incapable of restoring the desired relationship between God and man. It is a hopeless estrangement, and it is God alone who is able to mend the broken relationship between Himself and man. It was God in Christ who took the initiative to restore the right relationship between God and man.

Sin is universal³ and affects every man. Everyone has the inclination to sin. Sin separates God and man and it also makes God hide His face from man.⁴

In the Old Testament, God provided the means for reconciliation through the sacrificial system. The book of Leviticus is replete with examples of the sacrificial system in Israel. This is particularly so in the first seven chapters. They instruct the people of Israel how to approach Yahweh. A description of the Day of Atonement follows, in chapter 16 of Leviticus. The victim was supposed to be blameless, reminding the worshipper of God's perfection. The victim was costly, and so man was not to take sin lightly.

In the Old Testament, it was the sin and disobedience of the people that led to the exile of Israel. God had to judge the people for their sin and waywardness. God could let sin go unpunished. Nonetheless, it was God who took the initiative to bring hope and restoration to the people of Israel. Deutero-Isaiah speaks to the fact of Yahweh raising a person of His choice to deliver His people from captivity.⁵ The Suffering Servant of Isaiah was a provision from God,

³I Kings 8:46; Proverbs 20:9.

⁴Isaiah 59:2.

⁵Isaiah 42:1-4, 49:1-6, 50:4-9, 52:13-53:12.

to rescue His people from their desperate plight of captivity, and thus bring them into a right relationship with Yahweh.

In the New Testament the term atonement occurs only once.⁶ The more common term for atonement in the New Testament is reconciliation. The Greek noun for the word is Kataλλαγή and the verb is Kataλλάσσω. These terms are used in Paul's writings: Rom. 5:10 and 2 Cor. 5:18-20. Morris also states, "Reconciliation through the death of Christ is alluded to by the use of the verb ἁποκατάλλασσω in Eph. 2:16 and in Col. 1:20f."⁷ The two passages speak of the enmity between Jew and Gentile. The Gentiles were separated from the commonwealth of Israel. The Gentiles had no part in the promises of the Covenant. It was Christ who brought the two together. Paul goes on to speak of the work of reconciliation through Christ. With reference to the above passages, Dr. Morris writes:

This passage strongly insists on the divine initiative in the process of reconciliation; indeed the whole process is described from the point of view of Christ, and men are not spoken of as doing anything in the matter. They were 'far off,' they are 'made nigh' and all is the work of Christ.⁸

Like the Old Testament, the New Testament concurs that sin poses a serious problem between man and God. Death is the wages of sin.⁹ "Sin elicits God's wrath and displeasure, and necessarily so, because it is the contradiction of what He is. For God to be complacent

⁶Wiley, p. 217.

⁷Leon Morris, The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956).

⁸Ibid.

⁹Rom. 6:23.

towards sin is an impossibility. He cannot deny Himself."¹⁰ This sums up God's attitude to sin. When man sins, he incurs God's displeasure and consequently God's condemnation and judgment. Sin has entered the world and therefore marred the relationship between God and man. It is the restoration of this marred relationship which is called atonement or reconciliation, and this found its full expression in the cross of Christ.

B. Jesus' Identification With Sinners

Atonement means that God in Christ took the initiative to reconcile man to Himself. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost.¹¹

In His ministry, Jesus spent more time with the people who needed Him most. He was a friend of sinners. This does not mean that He condoned their sins. Jesus was found sometimes having table fellowship with sinners. By so doing Jesus was offering them salvation.¹² The Qumran sect was known for its withdrawal from those who were considered sinners. The same could be said of the Pharisees.¹³ The religious leaders of His day criticized Jesus, because he associated Himself with sinners and publicans. Jesus was concerned about sinners. But the Gospel writers never ascribed sin to Jesus.

Jesus' identification with sinners is seen in His submitting to John's baptism. John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the

¹⁰The New Bible Dictionary, p. 1190.

¹¹Luke 19:10.

¹²Matthew 9:10; Mk. 2:15.

¹³Leon Morris, The Cross in the New Testament (Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1976).

remission of sins. This does not imply that Jesus had sin from which He needed to repent. Matthew gives the reason why Jesus submitted to John's baptism. It was "to fulfill all righteousness."¹⁴ In relation to this Hunter observes, "From what he later said about him, it is clear that Jesus discerned the hand of God in John's mission, and sought to identify Himself with it."¹⁵ At His baptism, Jesus was being numbered with transgressors.

The divine voice that Jesus heard was perhaps God's approval of His mission of redemption. Three Old Testament passages were echoed, as follows: Genesis 22:2; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 42:1. It was like the Father was saying to His Son: Go ahead with your mission; you have my blessing.

Hunter is right when he says, "What Jesus experienced at His baptism was an inward authentication of His unique Sonship and the call of His Father to be a Messiah with a destiny like that of Isaiah's lowly Servant of the Lord."¹⁶ His acceptance of John's baptism was what Morris calls, "the beginning of that baptism of vicarious suffering which could only be completed in the cross."¹⁷ In all this, Jesus was conscious of His Messiahship.

Despite the fact Jesus knew no sin, by submitting to John's baptism He stood alongside sinful men so He could test their infirmities. McDonald makes this comment with reference to the significance

¹⁴Matthew 3:15.

¹⁵A. M. Hunter, The Work and Words of Jesus (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950).

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Morris, op. cit., p. 40.

of Jesus' baptism by John:

'In His act of baptism Jesus gave vivid expression of His identification with humanity. He identifies Himself with the people who had come to Jordan confessing their sins. He will publicly renounce the sin which he has always renounced in deed and spirit. At Jordan He openly unites Himself with human sin, at Calvary He will openly atone for it.'¹⁸

Jesus had indeed come to seek and to redeem the lost. He was one with those who needed Him and at His baptism the work of redemption was brought into being. He took that which was the responsibility of the sinner and made it His own.¹⁹

Writing about why Jesus submitted to John's baptism, Denney comments and rightly so, "It is as though He had looked on them under the oppression of their sin and said; On me let all that burden, all that responsibility descend."²⁰ Denney sees Isaiah 53 as the key to what transpired at Jesus' baptism; in Luke 22:37, it is applied to Jesus.

Jesus, as the Servant of God, came to seek and to save sinful men. "In His death He is not apart from sinful men. He is executed as sinful men are executed. Through all His ministry He had sought out sinful men. At the climax of it all He is clearly one with them."²¹

¹⁸H. D. McDonald, Jesus Human and Divine (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968).

¹⁹James Denney, The Death of Christ, revised edition (New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911).

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Morris, op. cit., p. 42.

C. Forgiveness Offered

Implicit in the doctrine of atonement is the concept of forgiveness. Forgiveness is the divine prerogative of God. Manson is right when he says, "Forgiveness is a free gift of God."²² There is nothing man has done to deserve God's forgiveness. Jesus as the divine Son of God offered men forgiveness. The birth narratives in Matthew and Luke speak of Him as one who would save men from their sins. Jesus forgave the sins of the paralytic and then performed the miracle of healing to demonstrate that the Son of Man had power to forgive sins. He pronounced forgiveness on individuals who met the condition of faith.²³

He invited sinners and those who were despised by society to table-fellowship with Him. In Judaism, table-fellowship meant fellowship before God.²⁴ Jeremias rightly points out the significance of table-fellowship when he says, "It was an offer of peace, trust, brotherhood and forgiveness; in short, sharing a table meant sharing life."²⁵

Jesus' inclusion of sinners in His company meant that they shared in all the blessings Jesus could give to man. Among His

²²T. W. Manson, The Teaching of Jesus (Cambridge: The University Press, 1955).

²³Mk. 2:5; Lk. 7:48, 50.

²⁴Joachim Jeremias, New Testament Theology, Vol. One (London: SCM Press Ltd., Bloomsbury Street, 1971).

²⁵Ibid.

disciples there were those who were despised by society.²⁶ In Jericho, Jesus went to the home of a tax-collector, a man who was considered dishonest and a traitor to the Jewish people.²⁷ Jesus must have done this to offer life and purpose to such people who were considered the scum of society. His identification with sinners was a clear expression of God's love. Jeremias points out, "The inclusion of sinners in the community of salvation, achieved in table-fellowship, is the most meaningful expression of the message of the redeeming love of God."²⁸

The parables of the two debtors, unmerciful servant and that of the prodigal son are clearly intended to teach forgiveness.²⁹ "All these metaphors and parables are pictures of forgiveness and the restoration of communion with God."³⁰ The prodigal son was welcomed home and was given the best robe and a ring. He was again a free man! But the Gospel writers emphasize the cost of forgiveness more than the accompanying freedom.³¹

In the parable of the prodigal son, it was the father who was hurt and wronged by his son. Despite all that, the father reached out in love to his son who was lost. The prodigal son, on his part, had to show a spirit of penitence to his father. "Forgiveness is not

²⁶Mk. 2:14; Matt. 9:9, 10:3.

²⁷Luke 19:1ff.

²⁸Jeremias, p. 116.

²⁹Lk. 7:41ff; Matt. 18:23-25; Lk. 15:11-32.

³⁰Jeremias, p. 114.

³¹G. R. Crawford, "A Parable of the Atonement," The Evangelical Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 1, Jan.-March 1978.

something to be taken for granted. It does not come about automatically."³²

The Gospel writers portray Jesus as seeking sinners. (It is always God who takes the initiative.) His death is seen in terms of forgiveness.³³ Jesus was able to say, "this is my blood of the covenant which is shed for many unto remission of sins."

With reference to the "blood of the covenant," Dr. Morris observes, "The blood of the Covenant must be interpreted in the light of the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31ff probably with a side glance at certain Isalaanic passages which likewise refer to a covenant."³⁴ It is in Jeremiah that the idea of the new covenant is fully developed. In the new covenant there was to be provision for the forgiveness of sins, "I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more." Dr. Morris links the shedding of blood and the new covenant with forgiveness of sins. He writes, "To say then that Jesus is shedding His blood to inaugurate such a covenant is to say that He is shedding His blood that men's sins might be forgiven. It is to ascribe atoning value to His death."³⁵

D. Need for Individual Response

The redeeming sacrifice of Christ was available through faith and repentance. The message He proclaimed demanded response of the

³² Leon Morris, The Cross in the New Testament (Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1976).

³³ Matt. 26:28.

³⁴ Morris, p. 51.

³⁵ Ibid.

whole man.³⁶ He summoned men to repent and believe in the gospel.³⁷ Personal faith and response to His message were demanded if man was to meet the conditions of salvation. The prophets in the Old Testament called Israel to repentance and faith in Yahweh.³⁸ Jesus called those who were heavy laden to come to Him so they could find rest.³⁹ The Gospel of John is full of references of how Jesus called men to a living trust in Him.⁴⁰

In calling the twelve disciples, Jesus called them personally. They were to leave all, and to take up their cross and follow Him. There was a need for personal commitment to Him and to His cause. In His call to discipleship or to salvation, there was always a need for the individual to commit himself unreservedly to Him.

Howard points out,

The human response that makes the provision of the divine initiative of love in the cross man's possession--is faith. Such faith is the responsible activity of man, but is possible only as man is convicted of his need of forgiveness and in repentance turns from sin to God.⁴¹

Jesus clearly demanded faith in Himself. Faith was a necessity to those who wanted to receive anything from God. There was no benefit for man if he did not respond personally to Christ's claims. Guillebaud observes, and rightly so, "However earnestly a man might desire to

³⁶Matt. 9:12-13; Mk. 2:7, 5:31, 32.

³⁷Mk. 1:14, 15.

³⁸Isaiah 1:16-19.

³⁹Matt. 11:28ff.

⁴⁰Jn. 3:16; 5:24; 6:53; 7:24-29.

⁴¹Richard E. Howard, Newness of Life, A Study in the Thought of Paul (Kansas City, Missouri: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1975).

amend his life, he could not receive forgiveness if he doubted God's willingness or power to forgive."⁴²

Though Jesus in His ministry called men and women to respond to Him generally, He also made it clear that there was a need for individual response and commitment to His person. There was a need for people to believe in Jesus, so that they could belong to Him.

E. The Meaning of Suffering

In the Old Testament, suffering was understood in terms of discipline. Suffering was intended to produce moral improvement in the sufferer. The suffering of Hosea's wife is a case in point, and her suffering was compared to Israel's.

For the Old Testament, suffering can have a positive value in that it may avail for the guilty. Suffering can be endured for others. This idea finds its full expression in the figure of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh. The great figure represents Israel as a nation.

The servant is depicted as the prophet of Yahweh, patiently and quietly teaching true religion to the nations wherever the beginnings of true desire for it are found (Is. 42:1-5). His mission extends beyond its borders to the ends of the earth.⁴³ In this service the servant suffers, but he is not dismayed because God is with him.⁴⁴ In all this, the servant was suffering for the nation. He became, as it were, an offering for their sin and it was through his

⁴² Archdeacon H. E. Guillebaud, Why the Cross? (London: Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, W.C. 1, 1967).

⁴³ Isaiah 49:1-7.

⁴⁴ Isaiah 50:4-9.

apparent defeat that he attained to victory.⁴⁵ Implicit in the suffering of the servant is the idea of vicarious atonement. The people would find blessing through the suffering of God's servant. It was through the suffering of God's servant that the purposes of God were fulfilled.

The New Testament writers do not view suffering as an evil. The people who were not sympathetic with Christ's cause thought the fact He suffered proved He was not from God. Jesus, in His teaching, made it clear that there was a need for the disciple to share the cross of the Master.⁴⁶ One of the requirements for discipleship was for a person to leave behind all that would hinder him.⁴⁷ The disciple was to take his cross and follow his Master, and in so doing he would save his life. Jesus called those who suffer and are persecuted blessed.⁴⁸

Dr. Morris is right when he says, "Suffering may be meaningful, and when it is accepted as such it is fruitful for good. It is in any case an inevitable part of life, especially for believers."⁴⁹ Suffering was part of being Jesus' disciple. He called men and women to this kind of life. "This is a condition of Christian service and is not subject to modification."⁵⁰

⁴⁵Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12.

⁴⁶Mt. 10:38.

⁴⁷Mt. 19:21.

⁴⁸Mt. 5:11.

⁴⁹Leon Morris, The Cross in the New Testament (Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1976).

⁵⁰Ibid.

Jesus must have seen His own sufferings as having special significance. Jesus must have realized that the path to blessing and victory was through the cross. With reference to Christ's victory through suffering, Filson declares, "The triumph of Jesus comes by way of His suffering and humble service and death. The resurrection follows the cross."⁵¹

However, Morris cautions against exaggerating the meaning of suffering when he writes,

We are dealing with a mystery here and we must not be dogmatic. It is in any case impossible to hold that any sufferings of the disciples are to be thought of as atoning. But if we must not exaggerate the significance of the words, we must not minimize it either. Jesus is holding out to His followers the prospect of sharing to some degree in His sufferings.⁵²

Morris here is calling for a balanced approach with regard to suffering. While he cautions against overemphasis on suffering, he also makes this excellent observation,

The truth is that for the Christian, suffering has been transformed by the fact that His Master came to suffer. Both our Gospels have a good deal to say about the sufferings of Christ, and these sufferings have saving power. These sufferings cannot be regarded as no more than the outcome of the machinations of wicked men. They are that. But they are also, and more importantly, the means whereby God brings blessing to mankind. The pathway to salvation lies through sufferings, the sufferings of the Son of God Himself. By these sufferings Christ has consecrated suffering for His followers. It is not palatable, but the truth is that suffering is the pathway to blessing both for the sufferer himself and for others.⁵³

The writers of the Old and New Testaments attached special significance to the sufferings of Christ. Christ Himself viewed

⁵¹Floyd V. Filson, Opening the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.).

⁵²Morris, p. 26-27.

⁵³Morris, p. 26.

suffering as the pathway to blessing. Victory for Christ was through the cross.

F. The Cross as the Climax of the Gospel

The cross of Christ is central to atonement. The Gospel writers gave special publicity to Christ's death. The attention they gave to His death far exceeds other events in His career. The Gospel writers gave special emphasis to His death as compared to His miracles. It is His death, rather than His life, which is made prominent by the Gospel writers.

The cross is central to the Christian message of redemption. Dr. Morris observes, "Right at the heart of Christianity there is a cross, and on that cross the Son of God wrought man's salvation."⁵⁴ It is not surprising that the theme of Scripture is the cross. With regard to the centrality of the cross, Dillistone declares,

The cross stands at the centre of the Christian religion. No other symbol adopted during the centuries of its historical existence can compare in importance with the cross. It is the dominating theme in art and architecture, it is the determinative criterion in faith and conduct, it is the impelling motive in devotion and service. Other systems revolve around other symbols--the crescent, the sickle, the lotus flower, the sun's disk, the living flame--but Christianity revolves around the cross. Nothing has a right to the name 'Christian' that is contrary to or incompatible with all that this symbol represents.⁵⁵

The cross was the climax because it was on the cross that the Son of God declared, "It is finished."⁵⁶ All the events that took

⁵⁴ Leon Morris, "The Atonement," Christianity Today, Vol. VI, Number 5, December 8, 1961.

⁵⁵ F. W. Dillistone, Jesus Christ and His Cross (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.).

⁵⁶ John 19:30b.

place in the earlier part of His ministry were part of a process which reached its climax in the cross. The cross was the climax of the Gospel, because it was at the cross that redemption, salvation and reconciliation were accomplished by Jesus. It was at the cross that God's love was demonstrated to its full extent. At the cross, forgiveness was offered to undeserving men when Christ said, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do."⁵⁷

It is appropriate to conclude this section with a statement from Dillistone:

In some curious way a cross has become a part of the very warp and woof of human existence. Often the texture of life has seemed disordered and confused, but gradually a pattern has revealed itself, and it has been the pattern of a cross. And once this pattern has been seen, a strange peace has descended upon the soul: if the mark of the cross is there, all must be well. For as we look into the mists of the past, one dim shape at least can be discerned. It is the shape of a cross. And somehow we know that that cross was the gateway to richer and fuller life. If, then, in existence as we know it, a cross is still to be seen--sursum corda. That cross also shall be the prelude to resurrection life.⁵⁸

⁵⁷Luke 23:34.

⁵⁸F. W. Dillistone, The Significance of the Cross (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.).

Chapter III

SPECIFIC GOSPEL THEMES RELATING TO CHRIST'S DEATH

A. Jesus' Foreknowledge of His Death

One question often is asked concerning the death of Christ: Did He know that He was going to die, or did death come to Him as a surprise? It has been argued that when Jesus started His ministry He had brilliant hopes of success,¹ and it was only with the passage of time that it became clear to Him He was going to die a violent death. Dr. Denney makes the following observation:

The Christian religion rests on the fact that there is not only an identity but a difference between His life and ours; and we cannot allow the difference (and with it the Christian religion) to be abolished a priori by a 'dogmatic' use of the term 'historical.' We must turn to our historical documents--the gospels--and when we do, there is much to give us pause.²

This statement by Denney is significant: it is when the Gospel records are studied as historical documents that one reaches the conclusion Jesus' death did not come to Him as a surprise. He knew that He was going to die for the sins of the world. Dale is right when he declares: "His death was neither the incidental nor the inevitable consequence of His collision with the passions and prejudices of the Jewish people. The laying down of His life was a voluntary act."³ When the Gospel

¹James Denney, The Death of Christ, Rev. Ed. (New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911).

²Ibid.

³R. W. Dale, The Atonement (London: Congregational Union of

records are studied carefully, there is evidence that Jesus was conscious of His pending death. In light of this evidence, the view that His death was a tragedy is untenable and unconvincing. Morris also speaks to this and his conclusion is reflected in the following:

Specifically the evangelists do not see the death of Jesus as an unmitigated tragedy. It is a tragedy in some senses. It is a tragedy that Judas should betray his Lord. It is a tragedy that the chief priests should conspire against Him to whom their Scriptures pointed. It is a tragedy that Pilate should let himself be brow-beaten into acquiescence in a deed that he knew to be wrong. Nothing can alter the fact that these things are tragic. Nor that the tragedy . . . But the tragedy is not the really significant thing about Calvary. For Matthew and Mark there is much deeper truth than that. Jesus came to die. That was His mission. That was the purpose of His coming.⁴

In the Gospel of John, Jesus referred to His death several times. At the wedding at Cana (2:4), He spoke of the hour not yet come. Later in John He spoke more about the hour of His death not yet come.⁵

In John 12:24ff, Jesus spoke of the hour having come. In verse 32 He spoke of being "lifted up from the earth." In verse 24 of the same chapter Jesus spoke of the grain of wheat falling into the earth and dying for the purpose of bearing "much fruit." With regard to this Morris comments,

This means that the indispensable condition of fruitfulness in the case of a grain is that it 'falls into the earth and dies.' And the indispensable condition in the case of One who would bear fruit among men is similar; He must die. So Jesus would not pray

England and Wales, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, 1905).

⁴Leon Morris, The Cross in the New Testament (Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1965).

⁵John 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20.

that the Father would save Him from death. Death was the very purpose of His coming into the world.⁶

He was going to lay down His life for His friends.⁷ Throughout John's Gospel Jesus was aware of His death.

It is equally true of the Synoptic writers, that Jesus was conscious of His own pending death. "Numerous sayings in the Gospels reflect Jesus' consciousness that a violent fate awaited Him."⁸ Early in His ministry He was asked why He did not teach His disciples to fast, and the answer came that there was no need to fast when the bridegroom was still present. However, He pointed out that time would come when the bridegroom would be taken away, and then they would fast.⁹ Commenting on this Ladd writes:

The concept of the bridegroom is admittedly a messianic one, and the taking away of the bridegroom cannot be interpreted in terms of ordinary human experience. It indicates, on the contrary that Jesus expected some unusual fate to befall Him that would bring grief to His disciples. A tragic event will take place that will disrupt festivities usually associated with the joy of the bridegroom and his fellows. This can be nothing other than His death.¹⁰

At Caesarea Philippi, after the confession of Messiahship by Peter, He began to speak about His own death which awaited Him in Jerusalem in unambiguous terms.¹¹ When James and John came to ask for places of prominence He was quick to point out to them that true greatness in

⁶Morris, loc. cit., p. 157.

⁷John 15:12-13.

⁸George Eldon Ladd, A Theology of the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974).

⁹Mark 2:20; Mt. 9:15.

¹⁰Ladd, loc. cit., p. 184.

¹¹Mk. 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34.

the kingdom was measured in terms of service. He asked them if they were able to drink the cup or be baptized with the baptism He was going to be baptized with.¹² "The cup is clearly the cup of suffering and death but in the light of the metaphor of the cup in the Old Testament, Jesus is apparently thinking of the cup of God's wrath against sin."¹³

In Luke 12:50 Jesus spoke of being baptized with a baptism and indicated that He was "constrained until it was accomplished." There is no doubt He referred to His death, as Ladd points out: "Such a saying indicates not only that Jesus is conscious that death awaits Him, it suggests more than this--that somehow His death is the goal of His mission."¹⁴

The conversation at the Last Supper (Mark 14:27) about the shepherd being struck and the sheep scattering has overtones of reference to His death. The anointing at Bethany (Mk. 14:3-9) was viewed by Jesus as preparation for His burial. To deny that Jesus knew He was going to die is to deny the ample evidence which the Synoptic writers have provided.

B. Jesus' Suffering and Death in Relation to God's Purpose

Jesus did not view His own death as an accident. He did not die as a martyr. It was no unfortunate martyrdom. Jesus viewed His suffering and death as part of God's plan for the redemption of the world. The writer of Hebrews points out that when Christ came in the

¹²Mark 10:38; Mt. 20:20-28.

¹³Ladd, op. cit., p. 185.

¹⁴Ibid.

world He declared, "Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God."¹⁵ The writer of Hebrews was quoting from Psalm 40:7-8. Jesus saw His mission into the world as being in the will of the Father.

At His baptism God had confirmed to Him that His mission met the approval of God. This was confirmed by the voice and the Spirit that came on Jesus in the form of a dove. Subsequent to His baptism were the temptations which further revealed God's will in what He was doing. Culpepper puts it well when he says:

In obedience to the will of God revealed to Him at His baptism and during the temptations in the wilderness, Jesus accepted for His vocation the fulfillment of the role of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. His mission was that of bringing forth salvation through suffering. It would inevitably involve his being rejected and put to death.¹⁶

All what Christ did after His baptism was in conformity with the purposes of God. Paul, the great exponent of the doctrine of the atonement, sees God the Father as freely giving up His Son (Rom. 8:32), and the Father gave Him up because of His love of the world (John 3:16).

Throughout His entire ministry, Jesus was deeply conscious of God's purposes in all that He did. It is interesting that when Jesus talked about His death and suffering He always ended with His own resurrection.¹⁷ When He spoke of His suffering and death He always added a note of victory. When Peter tried to divert Him from His goal--the cross, Jesus rebuked Peter as one who represented men not

¹⁵Hebrews 10:6-9.

¹⁶Robert H. Culpepper, Interpreting the Atonement (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1966).

¹⁷Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:32-34.

God. Jesus saw Himself as One who had come to fulfill God's will for the world. He had not come to inaugurate a materialistic kingdom in which He would rule as a political messiah, with the disciples occupying positions of leadership. Rather He had come to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). The shadow of the cross was constantly in His pathway, and it took on substance when He was finally crucified on Calvary's cross. The cross was God's will for His Son. The conversation at the Last Supper, the anointing at Bethany and the scene in Gethsemane, all refer to God's purpose being fulfilled through His death and suffering. He was going to die in fulfillment of Scripture (Mark 14:21; Mt. 26:24; Lk. 22:22).

The fact that the Father was going to vindicate His Son by the resurrection proves that there was no conflict between the Father and the Son in what Jesus set out to accomplish. It was all within the divine purpose of God. It was "necessary" for Christ to suffer.¹⁸ It was written in the law of Moses and the prophets "that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead."¹⁹

His sufferings and death were not an accident nor were they an unfortunate martyrdom. They were in line with God's purposes in His work of redemption.

C. Jesus' Death in Relation to Old Testament Scriptures

Atonement has its foundations in the Old Testament. Atonement was not first introduced by Paul and other New Testament writers. The Old Testament writers did allude to it in their writings.

¹⁸Luke 24:24f.

¹⁹Luke 24:44-45.

The election of Israel in the Old Testament was in itself a foundation to the doctrine of the atonement. The election of Israel resulted in a covenant relationship. The covenant was based on the sovereignty of God (Gen. 21:27; I Sam. 18:3). As Culpepper points out, "The covenant is rooted in the divine sovereignty. It is based on an act of redemption, which is an expression of pure grace."²⁰

The deliverance of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt was an act of redemption by God. The institution of the pass-over and the killing of lambs (Ex. 12) were all pointint to the death of Christ, who was to be "our pascal lamb sacrificed for us."²¹

Even before the Exodus there are references in Genesis, where the redemptive plan of God is apparent. Genesis 22 is a case in point, where Abraham's faith was tested. He was asked to sacrifice his only son Isaac. When Abraham responded with simple faith, God provided the ram instead of Isaac, Abraham's only son.²² John the Baptist was later to say of Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."²³

The sacrifices in Leviticus and the Day of the Atonement pointed to the fact one day One who knew no sin would die for the sins of the world. Sacrifices were God's way of removing the sin barrier.²⁴ The sacrifices that people brought to God were not in any way the gift to God, but rather God's gift to man.²⁵ It was this fact which gave

²⁰Robert H. Culpepper, Interpreting the Atonement (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1966).

²¹I Cor. 5:7.

²²Genesis 22:9ff.

²³John 1:29.

²⁴Culpepper, p. 24.

²⁵Ibid.

the sacrifices their atoning power.

Although there is much controversy surrounding the identity of the Servant of the Lord, Isaiah 53 presents us with One who died in the place of others. The Servant was innocent and suffered in total silence and then he was slain and was raised from the dead (53:6-12). Psalm 22 has overtones of the suffering that Christ had to endure on the cross. The drama of redemption started way back in the Old Testament, and in the intervening period the plan was gradually unfolding until it found full expression in the cross of Christ.

Culpepper is right when he says:

God works in human history through a covenant people. The covenant is based upon a divine act of redemption. In the Old Testament the nation Israel is the covenant people, and the act of redemption is the deliverance from Egypt. In the New Testament the covenant people is the church, and the divine act of redemption upon which the covenant is based is redemption from sin through the atoning death of Christ.²⁶

The death of Christ had a relationship of fulfillment to the teaching of the Old Testament. To deny that the Old Testament pointed to the death of Christ would be to argue against ample Biblical evidence. In the Old Testament the idea of His death was implicit, while in the New Testament it became explicit.

D. Jesus' Death as a Sacrifice

The teaching about Jesus' death as a sacrifice is found in Matthew 26:26-28 and in parallel passages in Mark 14:24 and Luke 22:15-20. It is to be pointed out that there are historical problems with regard to the relationship between the "Passover" and the "Last

²⁶Ibid.

Supper." Despite these problems, there is no doubt that when Jesus and his disciples partook of a meal it was in the Passover sense. What Jesus did was to give the Passover meal a new meaning in terms of His sacrificial death. Jesus viewed His death as a true fulfillment of the Passover. This was later confirmed by the Apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 5:7 when he declared, "For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." His death was interpreted in terms of the original Exodus Passover.

The Last Supper evokes a remembrance of two covenants, the first or old covenant as found in Exodus 24:3-8, and the promise of the New Covenant of which Jeremiah spoke (Jer. 31:31-34). The first of these two covenants was between God and His people Israel. The covenant was often sealed by sacrificial blood of a victim. In the case of the covenant which God made with His people, a lamb which was blameless and without spot was slaughtered and was given as a sacrifice to God. When Jesus said, "This is my blood of the new covenant," Jesus attached a meaning to His death that belonged to the covenant sacrifice of the Mosaic Law. When Jesus spoke of a new covenant, he referred to the covenant of which the prophet Jeremiah spoke. Denney's comment is pertinent here when he says,

It is this which is present to the mind of our Lord as He says of the outpoured wine; this is My blood of the Covenant. He is establishing, at the cost of His life, the new covenant, the new religious relation between God and man, which has the forgiveness of sins as its fundamental blessing. He speaks as knowing that the blessing can only become ours through His death, and as the condition upon which it depends His death can be presented as a propitiatory sacrifice.²⁷

²⁷James Denney, The Death of Christ (New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), p. 40.

In His death the ideals and hopes of the Old Testament were being fulfilled.²⁸

The concepts of the Servanthood and Messianic sovereignty of Psalm 2 and 110 must have informed the mind of our Lord.²⁹ On Jesus' assertion, "This is My blood of the covenant," Denney makes this further observation:

It is a word which gathers up into it the whole promise of prophecy and the whole testimony of the apostles; it is the focus of revelation, in which the Old Testament and the New are one. The power that is in it is the power of the passion in which the Lamb of God bears the sin of the world. It is no misapprehension, therefore, but a true rendering of the mind of Christ, when Matthew calls the covenant new, and defines the shedding of blood by reference to the remission of sins.³⁰

In critical scholarship, this interpretation of the death of Jesus is rejected on the grounds that it is inconsistent with what is known of God's love. God is love and He forgives freely; His love reaches to the vilest of sinners. To make forgiveness dependent on the sacrificial death of Christ is thought to be inconsistent with the character of God and His free love.

In responding to this objection, Denney writes:

The love of God, I repeat, free as it is to sinful men, unconditionally free, is never conceived in the New Testament, either by our Lord Himself or by any of His followers, as an abstraction. Where the forgiveness of sin is concerned, it is not conceived as having reality or as taking effect apart from Christ. It is a real thing to us as it is mediated through Him, through His presence in the world, and ultimately through His death. The love of God by which we are redeemed from sin is a love which we do not know except as it comes in this way and at this cost; consequently, whatever we owe as sinners to the love of God, we owe to the death of Jesus.³¹

²⁸Ibid., p. 40.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

As the remission of sins was obtained through sacrifices in the Old Testament, so would the remission of which Jesus spoke be secured by the blood which He was to shed. It may be added that forgiveness is founded on atonement. The sacrificial character of Jesus' death is further indicated by the rent veil of the Temple at the moment of His death (Matthew 27:50-51; Mk. 15:35; Lk. 23:45). The rending of the veil symbolized the free access to God for all mankind.

There is, therefore, a sense in which His death can be understood in sacrificial terms.

E. The Theme of the Son of Man in Relation to Isaiah's Suffering Servant

The term "Son of man" was one which Jesus preferred to use during His ministry. The term was common in Jewish literature. In the book of Ezekiel it simply meant "a human being." In Ezekiel it signified man in his weakness. The same idea is present in Psalm 8:4, where it shows man as frail but later invested with authority by God. In Psalm 80:17 the term stands for Israel.

It is in Daniel 7 that one finds something more than mere man in this title. Daniel speaks of "one like a son of man," who represents the saints of the Most High. To this one God was going to entrust power, judgment and sovereignty. In the Similitude of Enoch (I Enoch 37-71)³² this one figure becomes more than a representative figure, but rather a heavenly being. This heavenly being in the end would be revealed as judge.³³

³²A. M. Hunter, The Work and Words of Jesus, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973).

³³Ibid.

In the Gospels Jesus used this term to refer to Himself. The Gospels arrange the sayings according to their contents. There are sayings which speak of the Son of man as an earthly figure with authority. At times Jesus used the term referring to a suffering Son of man who would be victorious in the end. Then there is the group of sayings that speak of the Son of man as one who was going to come in glory as a judge. When Jesus used the phrase Son of man He might have had Daniel 7 in mind. His sayings in the Gospels echo the words in Daniel 7.³⁴ The title Son of man was an exclusive prerogative of Jesus. That this designation was a creation of the early church, as some scholars argue, seems unlikely since Jesus alone used the title Son of man and not His disciples.³⁵

Hunter puts forward two reasons why Jesus preferred to use the title Son of man to other:

First, it enabled him, without making overtly messianic claims, to declare his essential unity with mankind, especially the humble, the unfriended, the despised. Second it indicated (as Dan. 7 suggests) his special function as the predestined representative of the Israel he was creating and the bearer of God's sovereignty and judgment. It was thus at once a title of majesty and of humility.³⁶

Dr. Morris concurs with Hunter about the use of this title.

He writes:

Jesus knew Himself to fulfil this aspect of the Son of man's work, as His eschatological references abundantly illustrate. But he also knew that the path to glory for the Son of man was by the way of the cross. If He saw Himself as the Son of man He saw Himself

³⁴Mark 14:62; Lk. 12:32.

³⁵Hunter, p. 107.

³⁶Ibid., p. 108.

no less clearly as the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.³⁷

It is the combination of these two ideas which is important: the Son of man suffered; the Servant of Isaiah suffered. The conclusion may be drawn that when Jesus used Son of man he had Isaiah 53 in mind. His suffering would not be in vain, it was to be a vicarious and substitutionary suffering.

The Son of man was, so to speak, His official title. It was the way He described Himself in the light of His mission. He came to be the glorious Son of man. But these passages show that He would reach His true glory precisely by suffering. And nothing illuminates the nature and the meaning of His suffering like the great Servant passage in Isaiah 53.³⁸

The idea of the Son of man has a special relationship to that of the Servant in Isaiah 53. Although Jesus did not directly refer to Isaiah 53, there is sufficient evidence for one to conclude that Jesus had Isaiah 53 in mind when He used the title Son of man. Jesus linked the theme Son of man with Isaiah's Suffering Servant in a unique way.

F. Jesus' Death as Vicarious

It is proper to conclude that Jesus believed His death was vicarious. In using the title Son of man, Jesus portrayed His mission as fulfilling the destiny of the Suffering Servant. In Mark 10:45 Jesus speaks of the Son of man as one who had come "to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many."

The other place where Jesus describes His death as a vicarious sacrifice is at the occasion of the Last Supper (Mk. 14:24). In Mark

³⁷Leon Morris, The Cross in the New Testament (Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1965).

³⁸Ibid., p. 32.

and other parallel passages there are three Greek words which are used: hyper, peri and anti. All three words carry the idea of substitution. The first two mean "on behalf of," "for the benefit of," or simply "for." The word peri can be used in two ways: "on behalf of" or "in place of." In the account of the Last Supper the idea of substitution is obvious. In Matthew 26:26-28 peri is used and this includes the two ideas: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out of many for the forgiveness of sins." Both Luke and Mark (Lk. 22:20; Mk. 14:24) use hyper which has the idea of "on behalf of."

The Greek word anti is used in Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28, and for many has vicarious and substitutionary significance. In Mark 10:45 the word is used with the idea of "exchange." In His death, Jesus exchanged His life for that of the sinner. Apart from His death, the sinner was not capable to overcome the evil one. Hunter's comment is appropriate here:

His death he saw as a representative sacrifice for 'the many.' Not only is his thought steeped in Isaiah 53 (which speaks of representative and vicarious suffering unto death) but his words over the cup--indeed the whole narrative of the last supper--almost demand to be interpreted in terms of a sacrifice into whose virtue his followers could enter. The idea of substitution, prominent in Is. 53:4-6, appears in the ransom saying with its preposition anti, instead of.³⁹

There is, therefore, a sense in which Jesus saw His death as vicarious; He died instead of the sinner.

³⁹Ibid., p. 121.

Chapter IV

KEY TEXTS RELATING TO HIS DEATH

A. The Removal of the Bridegroom - Mk. 2:18 (Matt. 9:15; Lk. 5:34)

The Synoptic Gospels contain a number of sayings and passages that could be considered as referring to Christ's death. In the above passage Jesus was speaking to His disciples. "And He said, 'Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. But days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and they shall fast in that day'" (Mk. 2:19f).

Some biblical scholars do not consider the saying about the taking away of the bridegroom as a genuine word of Jesus. This part of the saying is ascribed to the creation of the early church which was anxious to create credibility for what it preached. It has also been argued that the saying has nothing regarding violent death. Those who hold this view think this referred to the parting that takes place in human relations.¹

However, Dr. Denney does not share this view. He makes this significant comment:

But there is nothing elsewhere in the words of Jesus so sentimental and otiose as this. He does not aim at cheap pathetic effects,

¹See James Denney, The Death of Christ (New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), pp. 17ff.

like the modern romance writers, who studiously paint the brightness and gaiety of life against the omnipresent black background of death. The taking away of the bridegroom from the bridal party is not the universal experience of man, applied to an individual case; it is something startling, tragic, like sudden storm in a summer sky; and it is as such that it is present in the mind of Jesus as a figure of His own death.²

Cranfield sees this saying of Jesus as "the first hint of the Passion on the lips of Jesus in Mark."³ If Jesus were to be taken away from the disciples, then there would be reason for mourning on the part of the disciples. The joy that the disciples had, would one day be interrupted by the death of Jesus. "The linking of this violence with the Messianic title 'the Bridegroom' indicates that death is part of Jesus' Messianic calling. He does not see it as alien to His mission."⁴ The Jews associated the imagery of wedding with the Messiah and Jesus used this to allude to the kind of death He was going to die. Once again this is evidence that His death was not something that came to Him by surprise. He knew it and it was His goal. He spoke about His death in Messianic terms.

B. The Suffering and Rejection of the Son of Man - Mk. 8:31 (Matt. 16:21ff; Lk. 9:22); Mk. 9:31 (Mt. 17:22; Lk. 9:44); Mk. 10:33-34 (Mt. 20:18f; Lk. 18:31-32)

These sayings of Jesus about His fate are considered creations of the early church. Wrede along with others attribute these sayings

²Ibid., p. 18.

³C. E. B. Cranfield, The Gospel According to St. Mark, The Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary (Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 111.

⁴Leon Morris, The Cross in the New Testament (Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1965), p. 33.

to the early church. The early church in her attempt to make the message credible must have created the sayings, so it is argued. The dogmatician has been accused of being too dogmatic. For the dogmatician these sayings of our Lord are genuine and mean that Jesus was to die for the sins of the world.

For liberals Jesus had come to teach men about the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men. When Jesus went to the cross it was an attempt on His part to move man's hearts by His self-sacrifice.⁵ Albert Schweitzer later came up with the idea that when Jesus went to Jerusalem to die, He was in fact forcing God to "bring his kingdom cataclysmically."⁶ But Jesus was not at all successful.

There are passages in the Gospels that show Jesus knew about His own fate before He even came to Jerusalem. For instance, He knew about the fate of the prophets and what had happened to John the Baptist. The words of the voice at His baptism spoke in overtones of the Servant of the Lord. In the saying about the bridegroom being taken away by violence, Jesus showed knowledge of how He was going to die (Mk. 2:9).

The key word in these sayings of His rejection is "must" suffer. The Greek word for "must" is dei and it means, it is necessary. Hunter sees in "must" an inward rather than outward constraint. It is what Hunter calls "the dei of divine necessity."⁷ The necessity of His death was in accordance with Scripture. God laid on Jesus the

⁵A. M. Hunter, The Work and Words of Jesus (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950), p. 113.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

divine necessity and Jesus freely accepted it. He freely laid down His life.⁸ His death was like a grain of wheat that has to fall into the ground and die in order to bear fruit.⁹ With regard to the "must" Morris observes:

There is a compelling divine necessity about this 'must.' It is not simply advisable. It is not merely expedient. It is not the best way under the circumstances. The expression shows that there is no other possibility. The hand of God is in it and this rules all else out. Even where the word 'must' does not occur statements about the inevitability of the cross can scarcely be understood otherwise.¹⁰

These sayings of Jesus about His rejection and death have overtones of the Suffering Servant. In Mark 9:12 Jesus speaks of being treated with contempt. In this saying of our Lord there is an echo of Isaiah 53:3. The Servant according to Isaiah 53:3, was despised and was not esteemed by men. The saying about the laying down of His life in John 10:11, 15, 17, 18 reminds one of Isaiah 53:10. It was the will of God that Jesus was bruised and put to grief as an offering for sin. Jesus in Mark 14:8 spoke of His burial and that has overtones of verse 9 of Isaiah 53. Hunter's comment is pertinent: "What we say . . . is that Jesus saw the cross neither as a glorious after-thought nor as a means of compelling God to act but as the very soul of his vocation as the Servant Messiah."¹¹ He had come to die and death was the core of His mission. Suffer many things--the many things He suffered meant more than His actual death.¹² "The cross was

⁸John 10:18.

⁹John 12:24.

¹⁰Leon Morris, op. cit., p. 27.

¹¹Hunter, loc. cit.

¹²R. A. Cole, The Gospel According to St. Mark, An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), p. 137.

the culmination and supreme point of a life of suffering for the Lord."¹³ Jesus would be rejected, this means they would consider the claims He made but would still decide against Him.

It was the nation's leaders who would be foremost in rejecting him. Nor would this be merely a matter of words. He would be killed. Jesus left them in no doubt but that being Messiah meant a cross. But the cross is not the whole story. On the third day the Son of man will be raised. The resurrection was as certain as the crucifixion.¹⁴

Jesus knew He was going to die, it was a divine necessity laid upon Him by God. It was God's will that he (Jesus) was going to die and His death would be an atonement for the sins of the world.

C. The Cup and Baptism - Mk. 10:38 (Mt. 20:22; Lk. 12:50)

This saying of Jesus was occasioned by James' and John's request for places of honor and prominence in the Kingdom. According to Matthew it was their mother who went to Jesus to ask for places of honor for her two sons. After pointing out that greatness does not come through dominance but through service, Jesus went on to talk about the cup which He was going to drink and the baptism with which He was going to be baptized.

In the Old Testament a cup is a symbol of suffering and joy.¹⁵ In Gethsemane Jesus used it as a symbol of suffering (Mk. 14:36). The symbol of baptism in the Old Testament has in it the picture of

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Leon Morris, The Gospel According to St. Luke, An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 169.

¹⁵Isaiah 42:7; 43:2; 51:17. Cf. Ps. 23:5.

undergoing God's wrath.¹⁶ Later in the New Testament the term came to be used for purification (Mk. 7:4). However, in Luke 12:50 it is used to signify how He was going to undergo God's wrath for man's sins. Baptism, as used here, has the idea of flooding or overwhelming someone. Cranfield makes this observation: "The use of the present *τινω* might possibly be taken to mean he is already drinking it."¹⁷ In the same way baptism would suggest His being overwhelmed by the burden of human sin and the judgment of God on sin. Morris sees in this a figure of the cross. He writes: "The shadow of the cross hung over him. He knew it was inevitable; it was the very purpose of his coming. But though he accepted its inevitability nothing could make it attractive."¹⁸ If Jesus had avoided the cup and the baptism "there would have been no throne for him to share with his apostles."¹⁹ The figures of the cup and baptism do suggest in vivid terms the awfulness of man's sin which the Son of God had to endure on Calvary's cross.

Thus in his vivid picture phrases--a baptism to be undergone, a cup to be drained, a road to be travelled--Jesus declares the necessity of his passion, with a strong hint in the 'cup' saying that he was for the sake of sinners exposing himself to God's judgment on men's sin and another in the 'baptism' saying that beyond the 'ordeal' of death he hoped for a fuller and richer ministry in the world.²⁰

It was God's will for His Son to drink the cup of sorrow and to be

¹⁶Psalm 69:15.

¹⁷Cranfield, op. cit., p. 337.

¹⁸Morris, op. cit., p. 219.

¹⁹R. V. G. Tasker, ed., The Gospel According to St. Matthew, Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), p. 194.

²⁰Hunter, op. cit., p. 118.

baptized by a flood of suffering. When the Son of God accepted the cup and the baptism He was in effect paying a full price for man's sin and that is atonement.

D. The Ransom Passage - Mk. 10:45 (Mt. 20:28)

This saying of Jesus is found in Mark and Matthew. Like the "cup" and "baptism" sayings this saying came after the two brothers, James and John, had come to Jesus to ask for places of honor in the kingdom. The disciples thought Jesus had come to establish an earthly kingdom in which they would participate. Theirs was an earthly kingdom, a political kingdom, in which they would emerge with power and honor (Acts 1:6).

Jesus went out of it was to correct their misconception of the kingdom He had come to set up. They would drink the cup and be baptized with the baptism with which He was going to be baptized. The granting of places of honor was not for Him. Those who rule over Gentiles "lord it over them," but it was not going to be so for His disciples. To be great, one has to be a servant of all (diakonos), for those who want to be first they must first be a slave (doulos). It was after this that Jesus uttered the words of Mark 10:45 and Matthew 20:28.

The authenticity of these words has been questioned by modern critics. Some see this saying as a secondary variant of Luke 22:27 with no redemptive content at all.²¹ To some Mark introduced a Paulinism; the saying was not uttered by Jesus. It was a creation of

²¹Ibid.

the early church which wanted to give authenticity to its message. These arguments are not convincing when it is considered that Jesus said He had come "to seek and to save the lost."²² Paul in 1 Cor. 15:3 says clearly that Christ died for our sins and this was part of the tradition He had received from the early church.

In the ancient world a ransom was a price paid for release of slaves or prisoners of war. The Old Testament added one more use of the term. A man under sentence of death might be released by paying a ransom (Ex. 21:30). With regard to the Old Testament use, Dr. Morris comments:

Like the prisoner of war, man is in the power of the enemy. Christ has paid the ransom, freeing him and bringing him back where he belongs. The sinner is a slave. He is in bondage to his sins. Christ has paid the price, His life, which brings release to the sinner. As a result he is a free man. The sinner is under death on account of his sin. His life is forfeit. But the forfeited lives of many are liberated by the surrender of Christ's life.²³

The passage makes sense when interpreted on the background of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 49:7-8. The concept of the Son of man echoes passages in Psalms, Ezekiel and Daniel where the idea of Son of man is found. A ransom for many (lutron anti pollon) has in it the idea of substitution. When Christ died, He died "in the place of;" this is conveyed by the Greek preposition anti. The word lutron is not found anywhere in the New Testament, but the idea is found again in 1 Tim. 2:6. Cole is right when he says about the passage, "It is the strongest statement of the purpose and efficacy of atonement and its cost to

²²Luke 19:10.

²³Morris, op. cit., p. 53.

God (1 Peter 1:18, 19)."²⁴ Looking at the passage through Semitic parallelism, the saying of our Lord echoes the language of Isaiah 53. "To serve" would mean to fulfill the mission of the Servant; "to give his life a ransom" reflects the Hebrew of Isaiah 53:10; "for many" echoes Isaiah 53:11f.²⁵ "What 'the many' cannot do for themselves Jesus, by his representative suffering, will do for them. The sacrifice of the innocent one, according to God's will, will exempt the guilty."²⁶

The ransom saying has in it the idea of substitution and possible sacrificial overtones. This could be taken as one of the main passages in the Gospels that contain the doctrine of the atonement.

E. Parable of the Vineyard - Mk. 12:1-12 (Mt. 21:33-45; Lk. 20:9-18)

This is not a saying of our Lord but one of His parables. The parable follows the Pharisees' rejection of Jesus' authority. The parable is described in the language of Isaiah 5:1f. The landowner's care and protection comes from the passage in Isaiah; the only new concept here is the tenant farmer.

This parable has been rejected as a later interpolation made by the early church in the interest of Christology. However, if the passage is approached with an open and objective mind it does throw light on Jesus' understanding of Himself and His Person. The Jews had

²⁴A. Cole, The Gospel According to St. Mark, An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), p. 171.

²⁵Hunter, op. cit., p. 119.

²⁶Ibid., p. 119.

rejected God's messengers.²⁷

The "well beloved" has overtones of "only" in John 3:16. The idea of reverencing God's Son calls to mind the words of Jesus in John 12:44 when He said that receiving Him means receiving the one who sent Him. "Christ is God's last word to men."²⁸ Tasker rightly observes:

In the present parable, Jesus indirectly, but none the less certainly, teaches that he is the Messiah acting by divine authority and destined in obedience to the divine will to be slain outside the vineyard of Israel.²⁹

The parable has Messianic overtones. Jesus saw His death as a Messianic death. He was not only a prophet, but God's Son among men.

The metaphor about the "stone" comes from Psalm 118:22-23. It was from this the triumphal Hosanna was taken. This was originally used about Israel as a nation. But here it seems Jesus was applying this to Himself, "the embodiment of the true Israel."³⁰ Men rejected Him, but He would become the chief corner-stone in the New Temple which God would build. In this Temple, people would worship God in spirit and truth.

In the parable, Jesus saw His death as a certainty. But at the same time His Messiahship would be vindicated by His becoming the head of the new Israel, a community of the redeemed.

²⁷Jer. 7:25; Mt. 23:34; Acts 7:52; Heb. 11:36-38.

²⁸Cole, op. cit., p. 183.

²⁹R. V. G. Tasker, The Gospel According to St. Matthew, An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961), p. 204.

³⁰Ibid.

F. The Anointing of Jesus - Mk. 14:8 (Mt. 26:12)

The anointing of Jesus comes in the section commonly known as the Passion. According to Mark, Judas and an unnamed woman are the principal characters in the anointing of our Lord. Mark seems to have inserted the story of His anointing before the plot and the killing of our Lord. The anointing takes place in Bethany.

John has an independent account of the same story. According to John the anointing comes six days before the Passover (John 12:1-12). John names the woman as Mary.

Anointing was a common custom at feasts. It was associated with joy and festivity. When the woman was criticized for the act, Jesus rose to her defense. According to Jesus, she had "done a beautiful thing to Him." She had "anointed His body beforehand for burial" (Mk. 14:8). The woman was probably showing her devotion to Jesus. In her mind there might be the anticipation of Christ's death as a criminal and at this point she was affirming her faith in the Servant Messiah.³¹ His words show that Jesus was occupied by His death. He was anticipating His death. Tasker has an illuminating and interesting comment about the anointing. He writes:

As she gazes across the supper table into the eyes of Jesus, she sees the shadow of the cross lying heavily upon Him, and she penetrates its meaning. She knows that He is ready and willing to die as a supreme act of love for his friends, and she reckons herself and her family among those friends. And so she pours the fragrant perfume, her most costly possession, over His head as though she were anointing a king. Her comparatively small act of sacrifice is symbolic of his much greater sacrifice; and she makes it to show that no gift is too great in response to such a love as

³¹Hunter, op. cit., p. 143.

His--divine love which not only gives everything but is content to be unrequited.³²

Jesus viewed His death in Messianic terms and His anointing has in it sacrificial overtones of His death. He was fully aware of His impending death as a criminal. But He knew He would be vindicated in His resurrection and exaltation.

G. Prophecy of Betrayal - Mk. 14:17-21 (Mt. 26:20-25; Lk. 22:14, 21-23)

In the prophecy about His death, all the four Gospel writers make clear that Jesus knew that one of His disciples would betray Him. The words in verse 18 of Mark's account come from Psalm 41:9. John points out how Judas was pointed out as the one who would betray our Lord. Mark makes it clear that it would be at the Passover Jesus would be handed over to Roman authorities for crucifixion.

The reason for Judas' betrayal of his master has not been easily discernible. John 12:6 shades light on the character of Judas. According to John he was a thief and he pilfered money. Maybe he had followed the Lord for personal gain and when it seemed to go the other way the one thing he could do was to betray his Lord. Some have suggested that Judas had the idea of a political Messiah and when he heard Jesus talking about a suffering Messiah Judas was disillusioned.

Jesus spoke of His death as within divine purpose. It had been determined, but this does not mean that Judas was guiltless.³³

³²Tasker, loc. cit., p. 243.

³³See Leon Morris, The Gospel According to St. Luke, An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 307.

The important thing in the prophecy about His betrayal was His reference to the Son of Man. This brings to one's mind the words of Mark 10:45 and the Old Testament passages that allude to the idea of the Son of Man. In the prophecy He alludes very definitely to His death and as He does so He alludes to unspecified Old Testament Scriptures. Did Jesus have in His mind the Isaianic Suffering Servant? His death was within the scheme of God's redemptive plan. He knew He was going to die as sacrifice for sins of the world--but woe to the man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed.

H. The Last Supper - Mk. 14:22-25 (Mt. 26:26-29; Lk. 22:14, 21-23)

The account of the Last Supper is found in all the three Synoptic Gospels. Jesus' words at the supper table do throw some light on how Jesus viewed His death.

Some biblical scholars view what happened on the occasion as having no reference to the death of Christ. Hollman³⁴ is one of the biblical scholars who denies the authenticity of the words of Jesus at the Last Supper.

The three Synoptic Gospels regard the Last Supper as a Pass-over meal. It is unlikely that John's Gospel is in contradiction to what the Synoptic Gospels say about the Last Supper.

According to Dr. Denney, the Last Supper had profound significance for Jesus and those who partook of it. Dr. Denney makes this observation about the Last Supper:

In that Supper, according to Rabbinical and Apocalyptic writers, the good to be enjoyed is the Messiah Himself, and it is to this

³⁴See James Denney, The Death of Christ (New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911, revised and enlarged edition).

that Jesus refers when He speaks of the bread and wine as His own body and blood. He is pre-occupied with the completion of his work, with the blessed prospect of the time when God shall have brought His kingdom to victory and when from Him, the Messiah sent of God, the powers of knowledge and eternal life shall flow unimpeded into the disciples as the gift of the meal which God prepares for those who are faithful to Him.³⁵

Jesus, according to Denney, was fully aware of His impending death. In the narrative of the Last Supper Jesus was inviting His disciples to participate in His death by faith. Dr. Morris is right when he says:

When Jesus invited His followers to share the bread, saying to them, 'This is my body,' and to partake of the wine, with the words, 'This is my blood,' He was referring to His death for them, but He was doing more. He was inviting them to appropriate that death, to take it so to speak into their very being, to make it their own. His Sacrifice is not something to be viewed from afar. It is something that His children are to make their very own. And they do so by faith.³⁶

The eating of bread and the drinking of the wine did symbolize Christ's death. The fact that the disciples participated in the Last Supper showed their interest in the death of Jesus.

While the participation of the disciples in the Last Supper was significant, it is important to consider what Jesus said on that occasion. In Mark's Gospel Jesus says, "This is my blood of the covenant" (14:24); in Matthew, "This is my blood of the new covenant" (26:28). Matthew qualifies the covenant as "new." Luke's account of the Last Supper corresponds with the Pauline form, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (22:20).

³⁵Ibid., p. 34.

³⁶Leon Morris, The Cross in the New Testament (Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1965).

Some scholars doubt the authenticity of the last saying. One of the reasons for doubt is that "the conception of the covenant owes its place in Christianity to St. Paul."³⁷ This argument is unconvincing when it is considered that Paul did not originate all the great ideas in the New Testament. There are two great ideas which Paul acknowledges to have received from others. In the Pauline account of the Last Supper in 1 Cor. 11:23, Paul makes the statement that what he delivered to the Corinthians, he in fact "received from the Lord." In 1 Cor. 15:3ff, when Paul was writing about the resurrection of our Lord, he again acknowledged the fact that what he preached he had received from others. "It does not follow that because St. Paul makes use of an idea he originated it."³⁸ The testimony of the New Testament associates the Last Supper with the Passover. The accounts of the three Synoptic writers are not creations of the early church in the interest of Christology. The accounts are genuine. Dr. Denney makes this assertion:

A conception of the Supper which sets aside the whole testimony of the New Testament to what it meant, which ignores its association with the Passover, the explicit references in every account of it to the shedding of Jesus' blood and above all the character expressly stamped upon it in the evangelists as a meal in which Jesus knew that He was sitting with the twelve for the last time and was preoccupied with the idea of His parting from them, does not demand refutation.³⁹

God made a covenant with His people. The Sinaitic covenant was made with sacrifice: "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you upon all these conditions" (Ex. 24:8). Because

³⁷James Denney, loc. cit., p. 37.

³⁸Ibid., p. 38.

³⁹Ibid., p. 34.

there is nothing about forgiveness of sins, the insertion of the clause, "for the forgiveness of sins," is considered a mistake. However, Denney does not share this view. He observes and rightly so: "Covenant blood is sacrificial blood, and we have every reason to believe that sacrificial blood universally, and not only in special cases was associated with propitiatory power."⁴⁰ The New Testament does not use the Levitical Law in referring to Christ's death. It, nonetheless, uses sacrificial language when it describes Christ's death.

The idea of covenant is not found in Exodus only. Jeremiah spoke of a new covenant the condition and foundation of this covenant was forgiveness of sins (Jer. 31:34). Denney comments about the establishing of this new covenant:

He is establishing, at the cost of His life the new covenant, the new religious relation between God and man, which has the forgiveness of sins as its fundamental blessing. He speaks as knowing that that blessing can only become ours through His death, and as the condition upon which it depends. His death can be presented as a propitiatory sacrifice. It is as though He had pointed to the prophecy in Jeremiah and said, this day is this Scripture fulfilled before your eyes.⁴¹

There is a prophetic symbolism in referring to Christ's body as broken at the cross. The "blood of the covenant" has overtones of Exodus 24:1-11, cf. Zachariah 9:11. The "for many" has the force of Isaiah 53 which was used in connection with sins. Mark has "the fruit of the vine," perhaps looking forward to the consummation of the kingdom in terms of the Messianic Banquet. Jesus here was interpreting His death in the Passover context and making it clear that it had a

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 39.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 40.

saving significance.⁴² Jesus was aware of His impending death, and He viewed His death as vicarious and substitutionary.

I. The Cry From the Cross - Mk. 15:34 (Mt. 27:46; Ps. 22:1)

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Mt. 27:46; Mk. 15:34). This is the cry of dereliction. Does this mean Jesus felt He was deceived as some think? Was this a human reaction to the acute suffering which He was undergoing? One thing is clear, Jesus did not utter these words in disillusionment, weakness or self-pity. There is no doubt that Jesus experienced profound suffering on the cross. Jesus, however, must have uttered these words on behalf of men and women in their sins. Jesus must have experienced some kind of barrier between Himself and the Father. Did He experience this due to His identification with sinners?

Many Reformers, including some conservative scholars like Dale, Denney and Morris, think it was a real abandonment which our Lord experienced. Christ, according to them, was suffering separation from God as He bore the sins of the world.

It was at the cross He experienced the darkest hour of His last moments. But even so there was a note of victory when Jesus said, "It is finished."⁴³ It may not be reading too much into the text to say that when Jesus uttered the above words, He was referring to His mission as Redeemer and Messiah which found its full expression at

⁴²Leon Morris, The Gospel According to St. Luke, An Introduction and Commentary (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 307.

⁴³John 19:30.

Calvary's Cross. The work of atonement was successfully accomplished, and all that man needs to do is to appropriate it by faith. His suffering was victorious suffering and all was in God's plan of redemption for a lost world.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out what Christ and the writers of the Synoptic Gospels had to say about the doctrine of atonement. It was also the purpose of the study to determine whether Christ viewed His death as an atonement.

The following conclusions were reached:

1. Atonement has reference to the work of Christ which found its full expression at Calvary's Cross.
2. Atonement is made necessary by the fact that man has sinned, and consequently is estranged from God.
3. Man is not capable of restoring the broken relationship between himself and God.
4. In atonement it is God who takes the initiative in restoring the right relationship between Himself and man. Atonement is costly. It cost God His only begotten Son.
5. Because atonement is costly, man is not to take sin lightly.
6. In the New Testament the term atonement occurs only once. However, the Gospels ascribe atoning significance to the work of Christ.
7. God in Christ identified with sinners in order to accomplish atonement. He did that without sinning or condoning sin.

8. At the center of atonement is forgiveness of sins. Jesus extended forgiveness to those who repented of their sins.

9. Atonement is not automatic. It is always accompanied by faith, personal response and a commitment to the person of Christ.

10. The Gospel writers attach special significance to the sufferings of Christ.

11. At the heart of atonement is the cross. The Gospel writers make the cross the climax of the ministry of Christ.

12. Jesus viewed His sufferings as having special relationship to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

13. The Gospel writers portray Jesus as the Suffering Messiah of God. Jesus in turn accepted this designation.

14. Christ viewed His sufferings as being in line with the purposes of God. They were no unfortunate martyrdom.

15. Atonement has its foundation in the Old Testament. The sacrificial system in the Old Testament pointed to the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

16. At the institution of the Last Supper, Jesus intimated that the shedding of His blood was for establishing a new covenant, which was for the remission of sins.

17. The use of the term "Son of Man" by Jesus has a special relationship to the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. His death would not be in vain; it had vicarious significance.

18. The use of three Greek words, huper, peri and anti, which carry the idea of substitution serve to illustrate the fact that Jesus viewed His death as having vicarious and substitutionary significance.

19. Jesus' saying about the removal of "the Bridegroom" was an allusion to the kind of death He was going to die. He saw His death as not alien to his mission. He spoke of His death in Messianic terms.

20. The sufferings and rejection of Christ were of "divine necessity." The sayings have overtones of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53.

21. The "Cup" and "Baptism" sayings indicate that Jesus was aware of His impending death which would be an atonement for the sins of the world.

22. "A ransom for many" (lutron anti pollon) has in it the idea of substitution. Jesus died in the place of sinners. There is an echo of the Isaianic Servant in this saying of Christ.

23. In the parable of the vineyard, Jesus viewed His death as a certainty, but He also affirmed He would be vindicated when He became the head of the new Israel--the community of the redeemed.

24. At His anointing, Jesus viewed His death in Messianic terms. He was aware of His impending death, but vindication would come at His resurrection and exaltation.

25. In the prophecy of betrayal, Jesus spoke of His death as within divine purpose. His death was within the scheme of God's redemptive plan. However, Judas was not absolved from guilt for betraying his Lord.

26. The symbolism of breaking bread has reference to the breaking of His body at the cross. The new covenant evokes memory of the One in Jeremiah 31:31-34. In the institution of the Last Supper, Jesus interpreted His death in the Passover context, thus ascribing to it saving significance.

27. On the cross, Christ experienced profound pain and suffering. However, the cry was not a sign of disillusionment, weakness, or self pity. Jesus uttered the words on behalf of men and women in their sins.

28. There is, however, a note of victory when Jesus said, "It is finished." On Calvary's cross the work of atonement was successfully accomplished.

In the light of the evidence presented by the Gospel writers and Christ Himself, one is led to conclude that the Gospel writers ascribe atoning significance to the work of Christ, and that Christ Himself viewed His death as having vicarious and substitutionary significance.

Indeed, God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dale, R. W. The Atonement. London: Congregational Union of England and Wales, Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street, 1905.
- Denney, James. The Death of Christ, Revised Edition. New York and London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911.
- Filson, Floyd V. Opening the New Testament. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.
- Forsyth, P. T. The Cruciality of the Cross. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1909.
- Forsyth, Peter Taylor. The Work of Christ. London: Independent Press Ltd., Memorial Hall, EC4, 1910.
- Hodge, A. A. The Atonement. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1974.
- Hunter, A. M. The Message of the New Testament. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, n.d.
- Hunter, A. M. The Work and Words of Jesus. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1950.
- Joachim, Jeremias. The Central Message of the New Testament. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965.
- Lightfoot, R. H. The Gospel Message of St. Mark. London: Oxford University Press, Amen House, EC4, 1950.
- Marshall, I. Howard. The Work of Christ. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.
- McDonald, D. H. Jesus Human and Divine. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968.
- Morris, Leon. The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956.
- Morris, Leon. The Cross in the New Testament. Exeter: The Paternoster Press Ltd., 1976.
- Moule, C. F. D. The Sacrifice of Christ. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1956.

Mozley, J. K. The Doctrine of the Atonement. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS

An Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Fern Vergilius. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945.

New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 1. Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967.

COMMENTARIES

Morris, Leon. The Gospel According to St. Luke, 1st ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974.

Moule, C. F. D. The Gospel According to Mark. Cambridge: The University Press, 1965.

Tasker, R. V. G. The Gospel According to St. Matthew, 1st ed. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1961.

BIBLE DICTIONARIES

Douglas, J. D., ed. The New Bible Dictionary, 1st ed. London: The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square WC1, 1962.

LIST OF BASIC ARTICLES ON ATONEMENT

Crawford, Rev. R. G., Ph. D. "The Parable of the Atonement," The Evangelical Quarterly, Vol. 1, Jan-March, 1978, pp. 2-7.

Fruchtenbaum, Arnold. "Why Did the Messiah Have to Die?" Good News Broadcaster, Vol. 37, No. 4, April, 1979.

Mikolaski, Samuel J. "The Saving Cross," Christianity Today, Vol. 7, No. 13, March 29, 1963, p. 671ff.

Mikolaski, Samuel J. "The Nature of the Atonement," Christianity Today, Vol. 7, No. 13, March 29, 1963, p. 623ff.

Mikolaski, Samuel J. "Blood Bought," Christianity Today, Vol. XI, No. 13, March 31, 1967.

Morris, Leon. "The Centrality of the Cross," Christianity Today, Vol. X, No. 12, March, 1966, p. 614ff.

Orr, James. "Incarnation and Atonement," Christianity Today, Vol. 10, No. 1, Oct., 1965, p. 28ff.

Scaer, David. "The Nature and Extent of the Atonement in Lutheran Theology," Evangelical Theological Society, Vol. 10, No. 4, Fall, 1967.