

# **Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Biblical Soundings, Isaiah 53 continued, Romans 3:25-26, and the History of the Atonement**

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This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christ's Saving Work. This is session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Biblical Soundings, Isaiah 53 continued, Romans 3:25-26, and The History of the Doctrine of the Atonement.

We continue our studies in Isaiah 53, taking Biblical Soundings for the New Testament Doctrine of the Work of Christ, the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53.

I've already really covered his suffering, rejection, and oppression, which are the major impressions of this servant song. His innocence, as we see in verse nine, is that he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. In verse 11, he is called the righteous one, my servant. His death was a sacrifice for sin.

I had mentioned earlier Biblical pictures that interpret the events of Christ's saving work. These Biblical pictures, as we might expect, have their roots in the Old Testament, and one of the New Testament pictures is that Christ is both a priest and a sacrifice. Here in Isaiah 53, we have a tremendous statement in verse 10, yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him, that would be the servant, he has put him to grief.

When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days. Those last words speak of Jesus' resurrection and exaltation, but I'm going to focus on this: when his soul makes an offering for guilt. This is a guilt offering, the Old Testament concept of an asham.

Here is sacrificial language, asham equals trespass or guilt offering, applied to the death of the suffering servant. We see this in Leviticus chapter 5, verses 14 through 19. There we read, that the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, if anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the Lord, he shall bring to the Lord as his compensation, a ram without blemish, out of the flock, valued in silver shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering.

He shall also make restitution for what he has done, a mess in the holy thing, and shall add a fifth of it and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven. Basically, it is a repetition, but just to reinforce these ideas, if anyone sins, doing any of the things that by the Lord's commandment ought not to be done, though he did not know it, then realizes his guilt, hence the name guilt offering, he shall bear his iniquity.

He shall bring the priest a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent for a guilt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him for the mistake that he made unintentionally, and he shall be forgiven. It is a guilt offering. He has indeed incurred guilt before the Lord.

Astonishingly, the God who hates human sacrifice says in Isaiah 53 and verse 10 that the servant's soul will be made an asham, a guilt offering. Even more surprising is the effect of this human sacrifice. 52 15 says, so he will sprinkle many nations.

The servant will die a sacrificial death and will sprinkle others. This means his death will cleanse away their sins. The reference to Levitical cleansing with blood is unmistakable.

Isaiah here predicts that the Lord's servant will die an atoning sacrificial death, which will cleanse away sins. There's more in this amazing chapter from Isaiah. Justification of the ungodly.

Isaiah 53:11 contains the following: by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. ESV by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. The atoning death of the will result in vindication for others.

Here is something unique in the Old Testament. In every other place, to the best of my knowledge, the verb justifies or acquit, I believe it's sadak, is used for the godly. I'm not saying the teaching of the Old Testament is different than the new.

I'm working particularly with the words acquit or justify. So, in the law, it's the job of a magistrate to acquit the innocent and to condemn the guilty. Proverbs say it is an abomination to the Lord to do the reverse, to acquit the guilty, and to condemn the innocent.

Here and everywhere else, God acquits or vindicates his righteous people. I'll say it again: this is not salvation by works in those contexts. The Old Testament teaches God's free grace and the forgiveness of sins based upon God's grace and so forth.

I'm talking about words, and the combination of the words here is very unusual. In general, God declares his people to be what they are. In fact, godly.

We see this Old Testament usage in James chapter 2, where God vindicates his righteous people. He acquits them. It makes sense that James, a Jewish Christian, uses the Old Testament definition of this.

Paul is the radical. Paul says something that, on the face of it, is scandalous, that God declares sinners righteous. We're so used to how that works out in Paul that we missed the scandal.

But in the Old Testament use of this language, God declares the righteous to be what they are, righteous. The godly to be what they are, in fact, godly. Of course, the reason they are godly is that he has saved them freely by his grace.

Nevertheless, they are godly, and God acknowledges that they are such. Here alone in the Old Testament and in the Septuagint, the word is dikao, the word for to justify in the New Testament. Justify is used of the wicked.

One more time. By his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous. That means justify.

And he will bear their iniquities. Here alone in the Old Testament, the word justify is used of the wicked in a positive sense. This is the Old Testament background for Paul's scandalous doctrine of God justifying the ungodly.

We see it starkly in Romans 4:5. And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness. That is a shocking statement.

We know how it works. Because Christ takes their place, God's justice is maintained, and indeed, God does justly declare the ungodly righteous. As a matter of fact, that is demonstrated, or pardon my pun, justified.

In the second passage we'll take soundings in the scriptures, and that is in Romans 3:25-26. But we're still in Isaiah 53, and I am marveling at God's great grace. The plan of God.

Isaiah 53 is one of the most remarkable passages in the Old Testament. It is so shocking. In verse 10, we learn that it was the Lord's will to crush him and cause him to suffer.

And though the Lord makes his life a guilt offering, the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. All the unjust suffering of the righteous servant is the will of God. It was God's will to cause the servant of the Lord to suffer.

In God's wisdom, the sufferings of the servant of the Lord are the means of blessing for others. Just to emphasize one point, and that is, again, the victory motif. I see six major pictures of Christ's saving work in the New Testament.

We've already seen sacrifice here in Isaiah 53. The word, the idea of justifying, and the servant bearing the iniquities of those justified, at the end of verse 11 in Isaiah 53, is very close to the legal, penal picture in the New Testament. But the Christus victor or victory motif is here in Isaiah 53.

The death of the suffering servant issues forth in triumph. 53:10 tells how, although the Lord makes the life of the servant a sacrificial offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days. Here is a prediction of the servant's living after he dies.

He will have spiritual offspring, and God will prolong his days. I marvel at the depth of teaching about our Lord's saving work here in this Old Testament prophecy. Isaiah 53:12 uses the language of victory to describe the results of the servant's death.

Therefore, I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong because he poured out his life unto death and was numbered with the transgressors. This is figurative language that speaks of the servant and those he helps enjoying God's triumph. It speaks of God exalting his servant after death.

There is language in exaltation in Isaiah 52:13 as well. My servant will act wisely. My servant will act wisely.

He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Once again, I'll say it. The terrible suffering of the servant is bordered on two ends, 52:13 and 53:12, especially the beginning of that verse, by the language of victory and glory, very much fitting the New Testament pattern of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

Furthermore, there is a universal application of the servant's work in this Jewish Hebrew song. Isaiah 52:15 speaks in sacrificial terms, as we have seen, when it says that the servant of the Lord will sprinkle many nations, and kings will shut their mouths because of him. This verse speaks in universal terms.

Here's a prophecy by a Jewish prophet to Israel predicting that the consequences of the servant's work will be universal. Once again, we bow in worship before the wonders of God's word. Here is a prediction of the work of Christ benefiting the Gentiles.

Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12 is thus a marvelous prophecy of the saving work of Christ. It contains many aspects of the work of Christ that are developed in the New Testament in seed form. It is no wonder that it is often referred to in the New Testament.

The Greek New Testament UBS number 2 listed 41 allusions to Isaiah 53 in the New Testament. The next edition of the United Bible Society's Greek New Testament was

much stricter and only tried to list predictions rather than allusions, quotations rather than allusions, and that number was reduced greatly. But both are valuable.

I have over 40 allusions to this chapter. That is, it had a great impact on the New Testament. Isaiah 53 contains other things as well.

Let me just make a suggestion or two. Verse 9 is quite remarkable, and the ESV communicates and translates the Hebrew numbers well. They made his grave with the wicked, and it's plural, and with a rich man, the ESV says, in his death.

Although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth, Jesus was crucified between two thieves. Is that what Isaiah is foretelling when he says he made his grave with the wicked men? And he was buried, of course, in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb. Is that what it means with a rich man in his death? It's very suggestive, and that fits the biblical story remarkably as it unfolds.

The other sounding is from Romans chapter 3, which many have called the most important New Testament passage on the work, on the atonement, especially of Christ. Certainly, Romans is a key letter of the New Testament, a key to Paul's thought, and here in a very important chapter on the atonement, we have a passage that is rich, crucial to the argument of Romans, rich, nevertheless debated. Romans 3:21, but now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it.

The righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law means apart from law keeping, apart from human righteousness, although the law and the prophets, that is the Old Testament, bear witness to it. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe, for there is no distinction for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and those who believe, it's an ellipsis, are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Four times the New Testament uses a language that traditionally had been translated as propitiation or propitiate here in Romans 3.25 and along with that Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, and 1 John 4:10. This is the most important of the four passages and usually as one works the meaning of the *helasmos*, *helasterion*, *helaskestai* word group to mean, here it's usually understood as other passages in that same way. But I need to say that there's been a real debate, and the traditional notion of propitiation, of God satisfying God's wrath and turning his wrath away from believers in the death of his son who bore the brunt of that wrath, was challenged especially by C.H. Dodd first of all in an article and later in the book, in his book *The Bible and the Greeks*.

Working especially from the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint, Dodd said the notion of propitiation is a pagan notion. It does not belong in Christian theology, so Romans 3:25 should be rendered not propitiation but expiation. It should not be, should not be the idea of, there it is 25, whom God put forward as an expiation by his blood rather than a propitiation.

It's a pagan notion of a bloodthirsty deity demanding his pound of flesh and this kind of stuff. Dodd claimed to study those Old Testament passages that use that similar word group and to not find wrath in those contexts. Unfortunately, his work was so influential that many just followed him.

There was a time when theologians needed to know the biblical languages. In my own doctoral program, there was a time when to work in that program, you had to know biblical Hebrew and Greek. By the time I got there, you didn't.

It was good if you knew Greek, but certainly, you weren't responsible for any Hebrew, and so what happened is, and Dodd, I'm not criticizing his intentions or his character, but his work influenced, I didn't say hoodwinked, influenced many others and so it became customary to say that this passage teaches expiation and not propitiation. Let me be clear: Jesus' death accomplished both. That is not the issue.

His death accomplished expiation, to be sure. Expiation is the putting away of sins. The difference between expiation and propitiation is the direction to which Christ's death is pointed.

In expiation, it's pointed toward sinners, and their sins and sins are put away from God's sight, and the person is forgiven. In propitiation, the direction is toward God himself. God's own character or righteousness, especially, is propitiated or satisfied.

That scripture speaks of Christ's work as an expiation is plain. Hebrews 9:25-26. Nor was Christ's sacrifice, nor was it his role to offer himself repeatedly as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then Jesus would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world but as it is he has appeared once for all, the meaning is time, at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 9:26. So I'm not arguing against the idea that Jesus' atonement accomplishes expiation. Indeed, it does.

I am arguing that in this place and those other three places, Hebrews 2 and now I'm not sure about that one, perhaps 13 no that would be Hebrews 2:17 1 John 2:2, 1 John 4:10 and Hebrews 2:17 that the meaning in these places is propitiatory and not

merely expiatory. Why do you say that? For two reasons. First the bigger context of Romans leading up to Romans 3:21 and following.

Secondly, the very words surrounding Romans 3:25 itself. The context is plain after announcing the purpose statement of Romans in Romans 1:16 and 17 Paul said I'm not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes to the Jew first and also to the Greek for in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith as it is written the righteous shall live by faith. Here, Paul calls the good news the message of God's saving righteousness to all who believe.

However, in the next verse, it's as if he took away the word righteousness and put in the word wrath because he says for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth and on he goes and so after announcing his theme in Romans 1:16 and 17 he does not seem to immediately pursue that theme of the revelation of God's saving righteousness in the apostolic preaching of the cross but instead he pursues the theme of the revelation of God's wrath. It is, as Luther said, the good news of 1:16 and 17 euangelion in Greek. Luther coins a word here he says it's only comprehensible in light of the kakangelion the bad news.

Luther is certainly controversial, but he is a tremendous communicator. There's no question about it, and so the theme is announced God's saving righteousness Romans 1:16-17. 1:18 talks about God's wrath instead of his condemning righteousness, and that is in place until 3:21, at which time it's as if Paul takes wrath out and puts righteousness back in 3:21, but now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law. It's a different word for manifested, but the overall idea is the same.

In between, Paul brings those without the law to their knees and Jews to their knees. He summarizes in 3:9, what then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. We've already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are all under sin.

As it is written, there's none righteous, no not one. On and on, he goes with quotations from the Old Testament, especially the Psalms. Their feet, verse 15, are swift to shed blood.

In their paths are ruin and mystery. The way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

He summarizes. Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by the works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Here Paul has accomplished his purpose. He has fully explicated the bad news. God's wrath is revealed from heaven against rebels.

Now, in 3:21, he returns to his announced theme in 1:16-17. But now, the righteousness of God has been manifested in the Apostles' preaching, apart from law-keeping from the law, although, of course, the Old Testament bore witness to it. Even the righteousness of God through faith in Christ Jesus for all who believe.

Faith is so important in justification that not only does Paul give it a couple of times in Romans 1:16-17 in the thematic statement, but as soon as he comes back to his theme, again he says it and repeats it. This righteousness is not grabbed hold of by doing but by believing for all who believe, for there's no distinction.

That is, everyone needs to believe. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Paul varies tenses here, and I forgot if I got it from Doug Moo or Tom Schreiner, but I agree. They agree with me.

I thought of it independently. They wrote before I did, but I thought of it before I read them, that the Aorist tense, for all have sinned, speaks of the original sin of Adam and fall short of the glory of God; the present tense, speaks of the actual sins, we call them, of human beings. And they are justified, that is, believers, after the little aside parenthesis of verses 22b through 23, for all who believe, 22a, 24, and are justified by his grace as a gift.

And then Paul sets forth two atonement motifs, two pictures of the atonement. He simply mentions the one, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. He doesn't explicate it here.

We'll see later on redemption involves a state of bondage, the payment of a price, the death of Christ, the resultant state of freedom, the freedom of the sons and daughters of a living God, and new ownership. We went from being slaves to sin and self, and even the devil, if you will, children of the devil, 1st John says, to being slaves, most free slaves indeed, of God. But Paul just mentions redemption.

He doesn't open it up here, but he does mention open up propitiation. This is the *textus classicus*, the classical passage for the doctrine of propitiation. The redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a hilasterion, either expiation or propitiation, by his blood, once again he says, to be received by faith.

This, why did you do this? But why did God do this? This was to show his right, God's righteousness because, in his divine forbearance, he had passed over former sins. What does that mean? It means in Old Testament times, God gave pictures of the atonement in the animal, in the sacrificial system, the putting on of hands, hands on



the animal's head, the confessing of sins, the priestly sacrifice, the priestly words of forgiveness, that's a picture of the gospel. And Israelites who believed and didn't just go through the motions in a perfunctory way were forgiven.

Based upon the blood of bulls and goats, yes and no. It was God-ordained means, but ultimately no. Ultimately, that prefigured, it looked forward to the work of Christ, which, as I said earlier, is so efficacious, it saved people before the deed was done.

Before Jesus died in 30 AD 33, people were forgiven from God's perspective, based upon that work of Christ, yet the future. So, in that regard, God was forbearing in his divine forbearance. The word means clemency.

He passed over former sins. That is, he did not punish the worshipers as they deserved. He accepted the gospel in the sacrificial system, and the substitute of the animal victim, and God truly forgave, but there's a sense that justice wasn't really accomplished.

So, God, every time he forgave, and I've asked my Old Testament colleagues at a couple of different schools, how many sacrifices were there in the Old Testament? How many animals? They're up in the millions. They say over a million, to be sure, which is incredible, then, that one sacrifice, especially emphasized in Hebrews, Christ's one sacrifice from all time, not only gives efficacy to those but brings them to a grinding halt. That's it.

Astonishing. But God wrote IOUs to himself. Calvin said that the butter bulls and goats primitively portrayed the gospel in a smelly fashion.

He called the Old Testament religion, which he rejoiced in as the truth, a stinking religion in that regard. God wrote IOUs to himself, looking forward to the one whom John calls the Lamb of God, who would take away the sins of the world by his own, shedding his own blood, that is, by his violent death on the cross. The work of Christ was a public demonstration of the righteousness of God.

God vindicated his own character in the setting by giving his son crucifixion. This was to show God's righteousness because it is divine forbearance that he passed over his former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, over against former sins, present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

There was a problem in the necessity of the atonement, but it is not what moderns and postmoderns think. They think, how could a loving God judge anybody? Just read three chapters of the Bible or three chapters of Romans. A loving and holy God could condemn the world.

The biblical problem is, how can a loving, holy and just God maintain his own holiness and justice and save anybody? He gave, again, those pictures of the gospel in the sacrificial system, but ultimately, the blood of bulls and goats and lambs didn't do the job. But the blood of his son did. Astonishingly, as Isaiah predicted, God set forth his son as a guilt offering.

The father punished the son with the punishment that the people of God deserved. We deserved his wrath. Christ steps into our place, and as he receives the thunderbolt of the curse in his own blessed and sinless person, we receive forgiveness and eternal life.

So, in the big picture of things, the question is, all that wrath is stirred up from 1:18 to 3:20 and 5:1. Since we've been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Where did that come from? Either Romans 3:25-26 tells us where it came from. We got peace because Christ took God's wrath, or Paul doesn't say.

So, the big context favors, as Leon Morris has argued, as Roger Nicole has argued, and the best of all is D.A. Carson in a chapter in the book called *The Glory of the Atonement*, a festschrift, a celebratory writing for Roger Nicole. Roger wrote an article in the Westminster Journal. That was very good.

Leon Morris in the Apostolic Preaching on the Cross, as I said, was so convincing that he convinced people like C.E.B. Cranfield and Tony Thistleton and other scholars who don't feel a need always to tow the conservative line, but who were convinced by Morris's superior scholarship. In this case, studying those same Septuagint passages, and in many of those contexts, there was wrath. Plus, not only does the big flow of the argument of Romans, not only does favor propitiation in Romans 3:25, but the immediate context does, as I just showed.

It is not the father demonstrating his righteousness in mere expiation, but he demonstrates his righteousness in setting forth his son publicly as a satisfaction of God's own holy and just demands. I thus agree with the ESV. It was Christ Jesus, verse 24 of Romans 3, Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood.

This was to show God's righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. It is an incredible thing. The vilest sinner who truly repents and believes in Jesus is declared righteous before a holy and just God.

I speak reverently. God must declare righteous that person. He's not constrained by some external force or whatever.

He is compelled by his own character. The same character that demanded punishment for sin, the same character that conceived a propitiation as the way to forgiveness, is the same character that acquits or justifies everyone who believes in Jesus. I've heard my pastor talk about a man who did not thank God for two who could forgive him.

This guy didn't thank God, who could forgive him. He knelt for hours on his garage floor on a cold floor with shorts on, so his knees were in pain. It was cold.

He was suffering, asking God to forgive him, and he did not feel forgiveness. Sitting in the church pew, the pastor explained his way through Romans, the concept of propitiation, and the free offer of God's grace and forgiveness in the gospel. The man got it. The Holy Spirit applied the work of Christ to him.

He believed and stopped kneeling in his garage for forgiveness. Jesus' work has brought forgiveness and eternal life to all believers, and his work is many things, including an expiation. His work is directed toward sins and puts them away for all time before the Holy God.

His work also propitiates God's justice, enabling him to maintain his moral integrity and to accept anyone who sincerely comes to Jesus through him. We move next to the history of the doctrine of the atonement, and we ask a good question. Why study historical theology? Isn't the Bible enough? It's hard to ever say the Bible is not enough.

The Bible is the main thing, and at the end, it's the arbiter, but do we really want to confine ourselves only to our own wisdom? Do we really want to shut ourselves off from the wisdom of the ages to men and women far more intelligent and godly than we are? I don't think so. It would be a foolish idea and so there is I have seen what I what is called a biblicism. It goes like this, oh I don't need any other help.

I'm just going to study the Bible myself. It is I in the Holy Spirit, and I'll get the pure word unfiltered through any human contamination. There's only one problem with that.

The person saying that is a human being who's contaminated like the rest of us. How much better he or she would do studying the Bible with others in a church context with God-appointed leaders whom God has gifted to lead and to teach and not only so but also to partake of the wisdom of the ages? As I go through the history of the doctrine of the atonement, I'm not trying to find one paragon whom we agree with on every point.

There is not such no such person. We will see strengths and we will see errors. We will see tendencies.

I want to give credit where credit is due. I've learned much from, as I mentioned before, H Dermot McDonald's book, *The Atonement of the Death of Christ*. That historical portion is really wonderful and Anthony C Thistleton, Tony Thistleton's systematic theology.

He is a British evangelical, not always as conservative as I would be, but I can learn a lot from him. He does love the Lord and is certainly an evangelical in his British Anglican context. We want to think about the early church, especially in the West, but also already overlapping somewhat in the East. We want to then think about the early church in the East.

We want to go to the Middle Ages and the famous teachings of Anselm and then Abelard, who strongly opposed him. Reformation brings us to Luther and Calvin as really representative and immediate reactions of Socinus rejecting almost everything that Luther and Calvin taught and then Grotius or Grotius with the governmental view trying to strike a via media a way in between and really not feeling as badly as Socinus who was a heretic but failed in many ways as well. In the modern period, we'll just touch on a few important figures: the father of modern theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albert Ritchel, a very influential 19th-century teacher, Gustav Alai with his *Christus Victor* book, that important book, and then a real contemporary having died only a few years ago the German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg.

Even before we get to this is this is in the West. Apostolic fathers were people who lived and could have known the Apostles. I was a naive graduate of a seminary who did a good job on exegesis but not so well on church history. They didn't have much room in the curriculum for historical theology. I went into a doctoral program, and I naively thought, oh, the apostolic fathers, these people knew the apostles; this is going to be great, this is going to be wonderful. And I'm reminded now of the first book of the famous Scottish theologian Thomas Torrance called *The Doctrine of Grace and the Apostolic Fathers*, and his thesis was that there wasn't any.

It was really scary; it was like Paul had achieved the pinnacle, a great mountain, and all of a sudden, man, you're in the valley, and people are learning to walk again. You have almost work salvation and so forth, it just scary, oh my. In fairness, there could be documents we don't have, and also, in fairness, they were doing things like dodging lions, so they didn't even have the luxury of time to think and study legally to do any theology like that.

But we have a gem in the Epistle to Diognetus, mid-second century, an anonymous work to Diognetus, and we don't know from whom. It emphasizes the death of Jesus on the cross, clearly for the forgiveness of sins; that's all good, not profound but good, in a justly famous passage. This is simply a gem. I don't know where it came from, but it's wonderful.

If they all said this kind of stuff, what I said a minute ago wouldn't be true, and Torrance would have said the abundant Doctrine of Grace and the Apostolic Fathers. The writer asks, quote, for what else could cover our sins except Christ's righteousness? In whom was it possible for us sinners to be justified except in the Son of God alone? Oh, sweet exchange and unexpected benefits, that the wickedness of many should be hidden in the one who was righteous, and the righteousness of one justifies many wicked. Unfortunately, the gem is not; it's pretty much by itself.

Once again, we can honor our fathers who died for the sake of the Gospel, even if they didn't leave us much deep thought. Irenaeus, 130 to 202 AD, is acknowledged as the first real Christian theologian. He's famous for his doctrine of recapitulation.

Irenaeus of Lyon, the church's outstanding theologian of the second century, continued the apostolic tradition. He confidently defended that tradition, which he called the rule of faith. He also defended the belief that the apostolic faith was founded on revelation from God to the apostles.

Irenaeus added a distinctive aspect, which he also regarded as true to apostolic teaching. He declared, quote, the Son of God, when he was incarnate and was made man, commenced the long line of human beings afresh, and furnished us with salvation, so that what we had lost in Adam, namely, to be according to the image and likeness of God, we might recover in Christ. This is his famous doctrine of recapitulation.

Elsewhere, he wrote, in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. That's Colossians 2. And again, all things are gathered together by God in Christ. That's Ephesians 1. Clearly, the whole chapter in Irenaeus' early writing *Against Heresies*, there it is, is glorifying to God and quotes biblical text over and over and over.

In Ephesians 1.10, Paul writes, to gather up all things in him, Christ. ESV, to unite all things in him. Recapitulation, or anencephalosis, then is based on biblical and Pauline thought.

This is similar to one of my atonement motifs. I find it's the one that God's people know the least, and that is where Christ is portrayed, especially by Paul, as the second Adam and the author of the new creation, the bringer of the new creation of God. That verb, anencephalosis, means to sum up, to recapitulate, to bring everything together.

Again, it has a special reference to Ephesians 1:10. According to Irenaeus, the reference to Adam supports the notion of recapitulating our bad fate in Adam by a new creation in Christ. This lies at the root of the Eastern Orthodox theme. In the

West, the early dominant theme, up until, well, to the Middle Ages, really, was the ransom to the devil view.

Anselm did a marvelous thing in saying, that's not it. The good Lord didn't owe the devil anything but a good swift kick in the pants. He didn't owe him any ransom.

But that was dominant. In the East, what's called deification or theosis was dominant. It's hard for us to understand that.

But here, Christ reverses the effects of Adam's fall. Irenaeus seems to have made explicit a theme that is genuinely implicit in the Pauline idea of atonement. He has four references in Ephesians 1.10 and gives careful consideration to the image of God.

He also depicts the atonement as a victory over evil powers. Christus Victor theme already. So, he's got something like some deification.

I'll explain more about that. It means participating in the divine nature, not becoming a god or anything. But 2 Peter 1:4, being a sharer in the divine nature.

He's got Christus Victor, the victory motif, and he's got this recapitulation business. At least two things are involved in recapitulation. One is Christ recapitulates every age.

Irenaeus misunderstood the comment in John 8 where the opponents of Jesus said, Abraham, rejoice to see my day. They said you're not yet 50 years old. You saw Abraham.

Irenaeus said Jesus lived to be about 50. It fit his scheme perfectly. See, Jesus sanctified childhood.

And then the teenage years. Yes, I said Jesus sanctified the teenage years. I know that's incredible to you, but it's possible.

Jesus sanctified young adulthood. He sanctified old age to them. 50 would be old age.

That is, he successfully, where Adam had failed, persevered in godliness through every age. That's called iteration. He also summed up the human race representatively.

Whereas Adam, our first father, fell, the second and last Adam succeeded. He was victorious, and we share in his victory. In our next lecture, we will continue our historical theology of the work of Christ.

This is Dr. Robert Peterson in his teaching on Christ's Saving Work. This is session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Biblical Soundings, Isaiah 53 continued, Romans 3:25-26, and The History of the Doctrine of the Atonement.