

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Isaiah 53, Rom. 3:25-26, History Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Isaiah 53, Rom. 3:25-26, History, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert A. Peterson's lecture, "Christ's Saving Work Session 3," explores biblical foundations and historical interpretations of the atonement. The session begins by examining Isaiah 53, highlighting the suffering servant as a guilt offering and the prophecy of justification for the ungodly. **Peterson then analyzes Romans 3:25-26, focusing on the debated terms of propitiation and expiation in understanding God's righteousness and justice in salvation.** Finally, the lecture introduces the history of atonement doctrines, starting with the apostolic fathers and moving through influential figures like Irenaeus, to demonstrate the development and diverse perspectives on Christ's saving work throughout church history.

**2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 3 – Double click
icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Christology).**



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3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Isaiah 53, Rom. 3:25-26, History

Briefing Document: Christ's Saving Work - Biblical Soundings and Historical Theology

Source: Excerpts from "Peterson_Christ'sSaving_EN_Ses03.pdf" by Dr. Robert A. Peterson

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Robert A. Peterson in Session 3 of his teaching on Christ's Saving Work. This session focuses on "Biblical Soundings" in Isaiah 53 and Romans 3:25-26, and an introduction to the history of the doctrine of the Atonement.

I. Biblical Soundings: Isaiah 53 Continued

Dr. Peterson continues his exploration of Isaiah 53, emphasizing its significance as a foundational Old Testament passage for understanding the New Testament doctrine of Christ's saving work.

- **Suffering Servant and Sacrifice:** Peterson reiterates the major impressions of the servant song: suffering, rejection, and oppression. He highlights the servant's innocence ("he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth" - Isaiah 53:9) and his designation as "the righteous one, my servant" (Isaiah 53:11). Crucially, Peterson emphasizes that the servant's death was a "sacrifice for sin."
- **Guilt Offering (Asham):** Peterson focuses on Isaiah 53:10: "yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him...when his soul makes an offering for guilt." He identifies this "offering for guilt" as the Old Testament concept of an "asham," or guilt offering. He draws parallels to Leviticus 5:14-19, where a ram without blemish is required as compensation for unintentional sins against the Lord's holy things, emphasizing the idea of restitution and atonement leading to forgiveness.
- **Quote:** "When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days...This is a guilt offering, the Old Testament concept of an asham."
- **Atoning Sacrifice and Cleansing:** Peterson highlights Isaiah 52:15: "so he will sprinkle many nations." He interprets this as a prediction that the servant's sacrificial death will "cleanse away their sins," drawing a connection to Levitical cleansing with blood.

- **Quote:** "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."
- **Justification of the Ungodly:** Peterson delves into the significant statement in Isaiah 53:11: "by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." He notes the unusual use of the verb "justify" (Hebrew: *sadak*, Greek in Septuagint: *dikaio*) in the Old Testament, which typically refers to the vindication of the righteous. He emphasizes that here, it is applied to the "many," implying the ungodly.
- **Quote:** "Here is something unique in the Old Testament. In every other place, to the best of my knowledge, the verb justifies or acquit...is used for the godly...Here alone in the Old Testament and in the Septuagint, the word is *dikaio*, the word for to justify in the New Testament. Justify is used of the wicked."
- **Connection to Paul's Doctrine:** Peterson argues that this unique usage in Isaiah 53 forms the Old Testament background for Paul's "scandalous doctrine of God justifying the ungodly," as seen 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."
- **God's Will and Victory:** Peterson emphasizes that the servant's suffering was according to "the will of the Lord" (Isaiah 53:10), and that these sufferings are the means of blessing for others. He also highlights the "victory motif" in Isaiah 53, pointing to verses 10 and 12, which speak of the servant seeing his offspring, prolonging his days, receiving a portion among the great, and dividing the spoils. This foreshadows Christ's resurrection, exaltation, and triumph.
- **Quote:** "The death of the suffering servant issues forth in triumph."
- **Universal Application:** Peterson points to Isaiah 52:15 ("he will sprinkle many nations") as a prophecy of the universal application of the servant's work, benefiting the Gentiles.
- **Quote:** "Here's a prophecy by a Jewish prophet to Israel predicting that the consequences of the servant's work will be universal."
- **New Testament Allusions:** Peterson notes the significant impact of Isaiah 53 on the New Testament, mentioning over 40 allusions in some counts, highlighting its importance for understanding Christ's saving work.

- **Suggestive Details:** Peterson points to the details in Isaiah 53:9 regarding the servant's grave being "with the wicked" and "with a rich man in his death," suggesting a remarkable fit with the biblical account of Jesus' crucifixion between two thieves and burial in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb.

II. Biblical Soundings: Romans 3:25-26

Dr. Peterson then turns to Romans 3:25-26, which he identifies as "the most important New Testament passage on the work, on the atonement, especially of Christ."

- **Context of Romans:** Peterson emphasizes the flow of Paul's argument in Romans, starting with the revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel (Romans 1:16-17), followed by the revelation of God's wrath against ungodliness (Romans 1:18-3:20), which leads to the conclusion that "all, both Jews and Greeks, are all under sin" (Romans 3:9). This sets the stage for the revelation of God's righteousness apart from the law in Romans 3:21.
- **Justification by Grace through Redemption:** Peterson highlights Romans 3:24: "[believers] are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." He briefly explains redemption as involving bondage, the payment of a price (Christ's death), resulting in freedom and new ownership.
- **Propitiation (Hilasterion):** Peterson focuses on Romans 3:25: "whom God put forward as a propitiation [hilasterion] by his blood, to be received by faith." He notes the debate surrounding the translation of *hilasterion* as either "propitiation" or "expiation," stemming from C.H. Dodd's argument that propitiation is a pagan concept.
- **Distinction between Expiation and Propitiation:** Peterson clarifies the difference:
- **Expiation:** The putting away of sins, directed toward sinners, resulting in forgiveness.
- **Propitiation:** Directed toward God himself, satisfying God's righteousness and turning away his wrath.
- **Quote:** "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."

- **Argument for Propitiation:** Peterson argues that *hilasterion* in Romans 3:25 (and other passages like Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, and 1 John 4:10) should be understood as propitiatory, based on:
- **The broader context of Romans:** The preceding emphasis on God's wrath necessitates a means by which that wrath is satisfied.
- **The immediate context of Romans 3:25:** The passage speaks of showing God's righteousness in passing over former sins and being just while justifying those who have faith.
- **God's Righteousness Demonstrated:** Peterson argues that God put forward Christ as a propitiation to demonstrate his righteousness in light of his forbearance in the Old Testament sacrificial system. While those sacrifices provided forgiveness for believers looking forward to Christ, they did not fully satisfy God's justice. Christ's sacrifice serves as the ultimate satisfaction.
- **Quote:** "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."
- **The Problem of God's Justice:** Peterson states that the "biblical problem" is not how a loving God can judge, but how a loving, holy, and just God can maintain his holiness and justice and yet save sinners. Propitiation provides the answer: Christ bore the wrath that sinners deserved, allowing God to be both just and the justifier of those who believe.
- **Quote:** "The father punished the son with the punishment that the people of God deserved. We deserved his wrath. Christ steps into our place...we receive forgiveness and eternal life."
- **Conclusion on Romans 3:25-26:** Peterson concludes that this passage teaches that peace with God (Romans 5:1) is achieved because Christ took God's wrath, satisfying his justice and allowing him to declare righteous those who believe. He aligns with scholars like Leon Morris, Roger Nicole, and D.A. Carson in this understanding.

III. History of the Doctrine of the Atonement: Introduction

Dr. Peterson begins an overview of the history of the doctrine of the Atonement, addressing the question of why historical theology is important.

- **Importance of Historical Theology:** He argues that while the Bible is the ultimate authority, studying historical theology allows us to learn from the wisdom of

godly and intelligent individuals throughout church history, avoiding the limitations of our own understanding and potential "human contamination." He cautions against a radical "biblicism" that rejects any insights from historical study.

- **Approach to Historical Study:** Peterson states that the goal is not to find a single theologian who is correct on every point, but to learn from the strengths and identify the errors and tendencies within different historical periods and thinkers.
- **Key Figures and Periods to be Covered:** Peterson outlines the historical periods and key figures he will address in subsequent sessions:
 - **Early Church (West):** Overlapping with the East.
 - **Early Church (East).**
 - **Middle Ages:** Anselm and Abelard.
 - **Reformation:** Luther and Calvin, Socinus (rejection), Grotius (governmental view).
 - **Modern Period:** Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albert Ritchel, Gustav Aulen (Christus Victor), Wolfhart Pannenberg.
- **Apostolic Fathers:** Peterson discusses the Apostolic Fathers (those who could have known the Apostles), noting a surprising lack of developed doctrine of grace in some of their writings, with potential tendencies towards "work salvation." However, he highlights the Epistle to Diognetus (mid-2nd century) as a "gem" that clearly emphasizes Jesus' death for the forgiveness of sins and the "sweet exchange" of Christ's righteousness for sinners' wickedness.
- **Quote (Epistle to Diognetus):** "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."
- **Irenaeus:** Peterson introduces Irenaeus (c. 130-202 AD) as the "first real Christian theologian," known for his doctrine of "recapitulation" (or anencephalosis). This doctrine emphasizes Christ, as the second Adam, restarting the human race and reversing the effects of Adam's fall, gathering up and uniting all things in himself (Ephesians 1:10). Peterson notes similarities between recapitulation and his motif of Christ as the second Adam and author of the new creation. Irenaeus also depicted the atonement as a victory over evil powers (Christus Victor theme) and

hinted at the concept of "deification" (theosis), or participating in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). He also believed Christ recapitulated every age of human life, succeeding where Adam failed.

This session provides a crucial foundation for understanding the biblical basis of Christ's saving work, particularly focusing on the sacrificial and justificatory aspects, and sets the stage for exploring the historical development of these doctrines within Christian theology.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Isaiah 53, Rom. 3:25-26, History

Christ's Saving Work: A Study Guide

Key Concepts and Themes:

- **Isaiah 53:** Understanding the Suffering Servant prophecy as a foundation for the New Testament doctrine of Christ's saving work, including his suffering, rejection, innocence, sacrificial death (guilt offering - *asham*), justification of the ungodly, and ultimate victory/exaltation.
- **Guilt Offering (*Asham*):** Its Old Testament meaning in Leviticus and its application to Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin and trespasses.
- **Justification:** The meaning of "justify" (*sadak* in the Old Testament, *dikao* in the New Testament/Septuagint) and the unique aspect in Isaiah 53 and Romans 4:5 where God justifies the ungodly through faith, contrasting with the Old Testament usage of justifying the righteous.
- **Romans 3:25-26:** Analyzing this crucial passage on the atonement, focusing on the concept of *hilasterion* and the debate between propitiation (satisfying God's wrath) and expiation (putting away sins). Understanding Paul's argument for God's righteousness being demonstrated in Christ's sacrifice, allowing Him to be both just and the justifier.
- **Propitiation vs. Expiation:** Differentiating these two concepts in relation to Christ's death and their respective directions (towards God vs. towards sinners).
- **Redemption:** Briefly understanding this atonement motif as involving bondage, payment of a price (Christ's death), resulting in freedom and new ownership in God.
- **History of the Doctrine of the Atonement:** Recognizing the importance of historical theology and engaging with the wisdom of past theologians. Understanding key periods and figures:
 - **Apostolic Fathers:** Initial reflections on Christ's death, sometimes with a focus on works.
 - **Epistle to Diognetus:** Early emphasis on Christ's death for the forgiveness of sins.

- **Irenaeus:** Doctrine of recapitulation (Christ as the second Adam) and victory over evil powers (Christus Victor).

Quiz:

1. According to Peterson, what are some of the major themes regarding the Suffering Servant highlighted in Isaiah 53?
2. Explain the Old Testament concept of the "asham" or guilt offering, referencing Leviticus, and how it relates to the interpretation of Isaiah 53:10.
3. How does Peterson describe the unusual use of the word "justify" in Isaiah 53:11 compared to its typical usage in the Old Testament?
4. What is the significance of Romans 4:5 in relation to the Old Testament background discussed from Isaiah 53?
5. What are the two main interpretations of the Greek word *hilasterion* in Romans 3:25, and what is the primary difference between them in terms of the direction of Christ's work?
6. According to Peterson, what was C.H. Dodd's main argument against the traditional translation of *hilasterion* as propitiation?
7. What are the two main reasons Peterson argues for the propitiatory meaning of *hilasterion* in Romans 3:25?
8. Briefly explain the concept of "redemption" as one of the atonement motifs mentioned in relation to Romans 3:24.
9. What is Peterson's rationale for studying the history of the doctrine of the atonement, and what does he caution against in a purely "biblicist" approach?
10. Briefly describe Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation and its connection to the Apostle Paul's writings.

Answer Key:

1. Peterson highlights the Suffering Servant's suffering, rejection, and oppression as major impressions. He also emphasizes the servant's innocence, his designation as the righteous one, and that his death was a sacrifice for sin, specifically a guilt offering.
2. The "asham" or guilt offering in the Old Testament, as seen in Leviticus 5, involved bringing a blemishless ram as compensation for unintentionally sinning against

holy things. It included restitution and was a means of atonement and forgiveness, mirroring the sacrificial language applied to Christ's death in Isaiah 53:10.

3. Peterson notes that typically in the Old Testament, the verb "justify" (*sadak*) is used for the godly, where God declares his righteous people to be what they are. However, Isaiah 53:11 uniquely uses a form of the word (*dikaio* in the Septuagint) in a positive sense for the wicked, anticipating Paul's doctrine.
4. Romans 4:5, which states that God "justifies the ungodly" through faith, is described as a shocking statement that finds its Old Testament background in the unusual usage of "justify" in Isaiah 53, where the righteous servant makes many to be accounted righteous and bears their iniquities.
5. The two main interpretations of *hilasterion* are propitiation and expiation. Propitiation suggests that Christ's death satisfies God's wrath and turns it away from believers, while expiation emphasizes the putting away of sins from God's sight. The key difference lies in the direction of Christ's work – towards God or towards sinners.
6. C.H. Dodd argued that the notion of propitiation is a pagan idea that does not belong in Christian theology. He claimed that his study of the Septuagint passages with similar word groups did not reveal the concept of God's wrath being appeased in those contexts, leading him to favor the translation of expiation.
7. Peterson argues for propitiation based on the larger context of Romans, where Paul establishes God's wrath against unrighteousness before revealing God's righteousness in justification through faith. He also points to the immediate context of Romans 3:25-26, suggesting God is demonstrating his righteousness by satisfying his just demands through Christ's sacrifice.
8. Redemption is presented as an atonement motif involving a state of bondage (to sin), the payment of a price (Christ's death), and the resulting state of freedom and new ownership as children of God. It signifies a transition from slavery to sin to being slaves of God.
9. Peterson advocates for studying historical theology to benefit from the wisdom of godly and intelligent individuals throughout church history, rather than limiting oneself to personal interpretation. He cautions against a "biblicist" approach that disregards the insights of the past, as even individual interpretations are subject to human limitations.

10. Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation posits that Christ, as the incarnate Son of God and the second Adam, reverses the effects of Adam's fall by living a life of perfect obedience through every stage of human life. He sums up the human race representatively, succeeding where Adam failed, and through this, believers share in his victory and recover the image and likeness of God. This idea is linked to Paul's concept of Christ as the second Adam and the author of the new creation.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the significance of Isaiah 53 as a foundational Old Testament prophecy for understanding the New Testament doctrine of Christ's saving work. Discuss specific verses and concepts that illustrate this connection.
2. Compare and contrast the concepts of propitiation and expiation in the context of Romans 3:25-26. Explain the theological implications of each understanding for the doctrine of the atonement.
3. Discuss the reasons why studying the history of the doctrine of the atonement is valuable for contemporary theological understanding. Illustrate your points by referencing the perspectives of the Apostolic Fathers and Irenaeus.
4. Explain Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation in detail, highlighting its biblical basis and its contribution to understanding the scope and nature of Christ's saving work.
5. Evaluate the debate surrounding the translation and interpretation of *hilasterion* in Romans 3:25. Argue for the view you find most compelling, providing textual and contextual support from the provided source material.

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Atonement:** The work Christ did in his life and death to reconcile humanity to God, overcoming the barrier of sin.
- **Propitiation:** The act of appeasing or satisfying God's wrath and justice through Christ's sacrifice.
- **Expiation:** The act of putting away or cleansing sins through Christ's sacrifice.
- **Justification:** God's act of declaring sinners righteous in his sight, not based on their works but on Christ's righteousness received through faith.
- **Guilt Offering (Asham):** An Old Testament sacrifice offered to make atonement for unintentional sins, particularly those involving a breach of faith or the holy things of the Lord. Applied to Christ's death in Isaiah 53.
- **Recapitulation:** Irenaeus' doctrine that Christ, as the second Adam, lived a perfectly obedient life through every stage of humanity, thereby reversing the effects of Adam's disobedience and summing up humanity in himself.
- **Christus Victor:** A model of the atonement that emphasizes Christ's victory over the powers of sin, death, and the devil through his death and resurrection.
- **Hilasterion:** A Greek word used in Romans 3:25, traditionally translated as "propitiation" but sometimes as "expiation," referring to the means by which God's righteousness is demonstrated in dealing with sin.
- **Redemption:** The act of buying back or setting free from bondage through the payment of a ransom. In theology, it refers to Christ's saving work that frees humanity from sin and its consequences.
- **Biblicism:** An approach to theology that emphasizes the Bible as the sole source of authority, sometimes to the exclusion of historical or other theological resources.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 3, Introduction, Part 3, Isaiah 53, Rom. 3:25-26, History, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: Christ's Saving Work

1. What Old Testament passage does the speaker focus on as a key foundation for understanding Christ's saving work, and what specific aspects of this passage are highlighted?

The speaker focuses on Isaiah 53 as a foundational Old Testament passage for understanding Christ's saving work. Several specific aspects are highlighted:

- **Suffering Servant:** The passage describes the servant's suffering, rejection, and oppression, emphasizing his innocence ("no violence," "no deceit").
- **Guilt Offering (Asham):** Verse 10 states that the Lord willed to crush him and that his soul would be made a guilt offering ("asham"). This concept from Leviticus (5:14-19) involves a sacrifice for unintentional sins and requires restitution. The application to Christ's death signifies his sacrifice as a means of dealing with guilt and trespasses against God.
- **Atoning Sacrifice and Cleansing:** Isaiah 52:15 predicts that the servant's death will "sprinkle many nations," signifying a cleansing away of sins through a sacrificial death reminiscent of Levitical cleansing with blood.
- **Justification of the Ungodly:** Isaiah 53:11 states that "by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities." This is presented as unique in the Old Testament, where the verb "justify" (sadaq in most cases, but dikao here in the Septuagint) is typically used for the godly. This verse foreshadows the New Testament doctrine of God declaring sinners righteous.
- **Victory Motif:** Isaiah 53:10-12 speaks of the servant seeing his offspring, prolonging his days (resurrection and exaltation), and dividing the spoils with the strong, indicating a triumph resulting from his sacrificial death. This aligns with the New Testament theme of Christ's victory.
- **Universal Application:** Isaiah 52:15 suggests a universal impact of the servant's work, as he will "sprinkle many nations," including Gentiles.

- **Fulfillment in Jesus' Life and Death:** The speaker notes suggestive parallels between Isaiah 53:9 (grave with the wicked and a rich man in his death) and the crucifixion alongside thieves and burial in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb.

2. How does the speaker explain the Old Testament concept of justification and how does it differ from Paul's usage in the New Testament, particularly in Romans?

In the Old Testament, the speaker explains that the word typically translated as "justifies" or "acquits" (primarily the Hebrew word *sadak*) is used when God declares his already righteous or godly people to be what they are. It's an acknowledgment of their state, which is a result of God's grace and forgiveness. The focus is on God vindicating those who are already in a right relationship with Him. This usage is also seen in James 2.

Paul's usage, particularly in Romans 3 and 4, is described as "scandalous" because he states that God justifies the ungodly (Romans 4:5). This is presented as a unique development from the Old Testament usage. The speaker clarifies that in Paul's understanding, God declares sinners righteous, not based on their works or inherent godliness, but through faith in Jesus Christ, who takes their place, satisfying God's justice while extending grace. This is tied to the idea that in the Old Testament, the word *dikaioō* (the Greek equivalent used in the Septuagint and New Testament) is uniquely used in Isaiah 53:11 in a positive sense regarding the wicked, providing an Old Testament foundation for Paul's doctrine.

3. What is the significance of Romans 3:25-26 in the context of the atonement, and what is the debate surrounding the translation of the key term in this passage?

Romans 3:25-26 is considered by many to be the most important New Testament passage on the atonement. It presents Jesus Christ as the one "whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith." This passage is crucial to Paul's argument in Romans, following his demonstration of universal sinfulness and preceding his explanation of justification by faith.

The central debate revolves around the translation of the Greek word *hilasterion*, traditionally rendered as "propitiation." C.H. Dodd argued that "propitiation" carries pagan connotations of appeasing an angry deity and proposed "expiation" (the putting away of sins) as a more accurate translation based on his interpretation of the Septuagint. The speaker contends that while Christ's death certainly accomplished expiation (putting away sins directed towards sinners), the term *hilasterion* in this context and others (Hebrews 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 1 John 4:10) also signifies "propitiation" (satisfying God's righteousness and turning away his wrath).

The speaker argues for "propitiation" based on the larger context of Romans, where Paul establishes God's wrath against unrighteousness before revealing his saving righteousness through faith. Christ's death as a propitiation addresses the issue of God's wrath and justice, allowing him to be both just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus. The immediate context of Romans 3:25-26 also supports this view by highlighting God's righteousness in passing over former sins and demonstrating his righteousness at the present time through Christ's sacrifice.

4. What is the difference between expiation and propitiation as explained by the speaker in relation to Christ's death?

The speaker distinguishes between expiation and propitiation by the direction in which Christ's death is pointed.

- **Expiation:** This refers to the putting away of sins. Christ's death, in this sense, is directed towards sinners and their sins, removing them from God's sight and resulting in forgiveness. Hebrews 9:26 is cited as a clear example of expiation.
- **Propitiation:** This refers to the satisfaction of God's own character or righteousness, especially his justice and holiness. Christ's death, in this sense, is directed towards God himself, appeasing his wrath against sin and satisfying his just demands. The speaker argues that Romans 3:25 and similar passages emphasize this aspect, allowing God to maintain his moral integrity while justifying sinners.

The speaker emphasizes that Christ's death accomplishes both expiation (dealing with sin) and propitiation (dealing with God's righteous wrath).

5. Why does the speaker argue that studying the history of the doctrine of the atonement is important, even though the Bible is considered the ultimate authority?

The speaker argues that studying the history of the doctrine of the atonement is crucial for several reasons:

- **Avoiding Isolation and "Biblicism":** Relying solely on one's own interpretation of the Bible without engaging with the wisdom of past generations is seen as foolish and potentially flawed due to individual limitations and biases. The speaker critiques a "biblicism" that rejects any human contribution to understanding Scripture.

- **Learning from Others:** Studying historical theology allows us to benefit from the insights of godly and intelligent men and women throughout church history who have grappled with the same theological questions.
- **Identifying Strengths and Errors:** By examining historical perspectives, we can recognize both valuable contributions and potential mistakes in the development of the doctrine, leading to a more nuanced and informed understanding.
- **Appreciating the Development of Doctrine:** Understanding the historical progression of theological thought helps us see how key biblical themes have been interpreted and articulated over time.

The speaker emphasizes that while the Bible remains the ultimate arbiter of truth, engaging with historical theology provides a richer and more communal approach to understanding its teachings.

6. According to the speaker, what were some of the key themes or views on the atonement in the early church, particularly in the West and the East?

The speaker highlights the following key themes in the early church:

- **West (Apostolic Fathers):** While acknowledging a potential lack of depth or even concerning trends towards works-based salvation in some of their writings, the speaker mentions the Epistle to Diognetus (mid-second century) as a "gem" that clearly emphasizes Jesus' death on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. It also contains a powerful passage about a "sweet exchange" where the righteousness of one justifies many wicked. However, this level of clarity wasn't consistently present.
- **West (Irenaeus):** Irenaeus (130-202 AD) is recognized as the first real Christian theologian, known for his doctrine of **recapitulation**. This theme emphasizes Christ as the second Adam who reverses the effects of Adam's fall by living a life of perfect obedience through every stage of life (iteration) and representatively summing up humanity in himself (victory). Irenaeus also portrays the atonement as a **victory over evil powers (Christus Victor)** and hints at the idea of **deification** or **theosis** (sharing in the divine nature, not becoming God).
- **East:** The dominant theme in the East was **deification** or **theosis**, emphasizing the idea that Christ's work enables believers to participate in the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), overcoming the effects of Adam's fall.

The speaker contrasts the later dominance of the "ransom to the devil" view in the West (before Anselm) with the Eastern emphasis on theosis.

7. What is Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation, and what biblical basis does the speaker suggest for this idea?

Irenaeus' doctrine of recapitulation posits that Christ, as the incarnate Son of God, began the human line afresh, undoing what was lost in Adam. The speaker explains two key aspects:

- **Iteration:** Christ recapitulated (went through again) every age of human life, from childhood to old age, successfully persevering in godliness where Adam failed, thus sanctifying each stage. The speaker mentions Irenaeus' (mistaken) belief that Jesus lived to around 50 to fit this scheme.
- **Representative Summation:** Christ representatively summed up the human race. As the second and last Adam, he was victorious where the first Adam fell, and through union with him, believers share in his victory.

The speaker suggests that recapitulation is based on biblical and Pauline thought, particularly Ephesians 1:10 ("to gather up all things in him, Christ") and the portrayal of Christ as the second Adam and the author of the new creation. The idea is that Christ brings everything together and reverses the negative consequences of Adam's sin.

8. What is the "Christus Victor" motif, and where does the speaker find evidence for it in the passages discussed?

The "Christus Victor" motif is a view of the atonement that emphasizes Christ's victory over the powers of evil, such as sin, death, and the devil. The speaker finds evidence for this motif in:

- **Isaiah 53:** Verse 12 uses the language of victory to describe the results of the servant's death, stating that God 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. This speaks of God exalting his servant after death and triumphing.
- **Irenaeus' Theology:** The speaker notes that Irenaeus also depicted the atonement as a victory over evil powers, aligning with the Christus Victor theme.

The speaker highlights that the triumph resulting from the suffering servant's death in Isaiah and Irenaeus' understanding of the atonement both point to the Christus Victor motif, where Christ's death and resurrection are seen as a decisive defeat of hostile forces.