

Dr. Robert A. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 5, Introduction, Part 5, History of Doctrine, Christology 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 5, Introduction, Part 5, History of Doctrine, Christology, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Robert Peterson's lecture, "Christ's Saving Work, Session 5," explores the history of atonement doctrines and their connection to Christology. The session begins by examining post-Reformation views, focusing on Socinus's denial of Christ's deity and the atonement, followed by Grotius's governmental theory. **Peterson then discusses modern theologians like Schleiermacher and Ritschl, highlighting their more subjective approaches, and Aulen's "Christus Victor" perspective.** He concludes the historical survey with Pannenberg's integration of Christ's person and work. **Transitioning to Christology, Peterson emphasizes the inseparability of Christ's person and work and the Trinity's involvement in Christ's saving act.**

**2. 27 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 5 – Double click
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there (Theology → Theology, Peterson → Christology).**



Peterson_ChristWork_Session05.mp3

3. Briefing Document: Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 5, Introduction, Part 5, History of Doctrine, Christology

Briefing Document: Dr. Robert A. Peterson on Christ's Saving Work - Session 5

Overview: This session delves into the historical responses to the Reformation's doctrine of the atonement, focusing on figures like Faustus Socinus, Hugo Grotius, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, Gustaf Aulen, and Wolfhart Pannenberg. It then transitions into an introduction to Christology, emphasizing the inseparability of Christ's person and work and the Trinitarian context of his saving act.

Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

I. Responses to the Reformation's Doctrine of the Atonement:

- **Faustus Socinus (1539-1604): Rejection of Penal Substitution and Christ's Deity:**
- Socinus vehemently opposed the "forensic or legal and punitive, that is penal, view of the atonement" strongly asserted by the Reformers (p. 1).
- His primary aim was to deny Christ's deity, arguing that if Christ was not God, his death could not have atoning value. "The whole effort of Socinus was to deny Christ's deity and that, therefore that his death had any atoning value" (p. 1).
- Socinus held a Pelagian view of sin (Adam as a bad example) and an Arian view of Christ (denying his deity).
- He rejected the imputation of Adam's sin and the necessity of divine justice requiring punishment. "'There is no such justice in God as requires absolutely and inexorably that sin be punished and such as God himself cannot repudiate'" (p. 2).
- Socinus believed God set aside justice for mercy and that Christ's resurrection proved his death had no vicarious saving value. He argued Christ makes "oblation...not on the cross...but in heaven" (p. 2).
- For Socinus, Christ's sufferings were disciplinary, not judicial, and satisfaction was an absurd idea.
- Christ's significance lies in assuring forgiveness and announcing the way to eternal life, acting as a "moral teacher par excellence" (p. 2). He moves men to penitence through his promises, leading to the blotting out of sins, shifting the focus from his death to his heavenly life.

- Peterson identifies Socinianism as a "heresy" – a "damning doctrine" that cuts one off from grace due to the denial of Christ's deity (p. 3). He clarifies that while denying Christ's deity doesn't change who Jesus is, it prevents one from relating to him correctly for salvation, requiring an implicit acknowledgment of his divine ability to forgive.
- **Hugo Grotius (1583-1645): Governmental Theory of the Atonement:**
 - Grotius defended the Reformation by asserting that "satisfaction was necessary for God justly to exercise mercy" (p. 4) and aimed to refute Socinus.
 - However, he agreed with Socinus that justice is not an inherent necessity of the divine nature but an "effect of his will" (p. 4), which Peterson identifies as an error.
 - Grotius viewed God as a "ruler" rather than a strict "judge," leading to the "governmental theory" of the atonement, where Christ's death serves the best interests of God's moral government.
 - He believed God "relaxed" or "toned down" the law, stating, "'all positive laws are relaxable'" (p. 5).
 - Christ's punishment was required for God's government but was not necessarily inflicted on the sinner. "'It is to be observed that it is essential to punishment that it be inflicted for sin, but not usually essential that it be inflicted on the sinner himself'" (p. 5).
 - Christ's death was a "substitute for a penalty" and a "signal exhibition" of regard for the law, acting as a "penal example" rather than penal substitution.
 - While not a heresy, Peterson considers it a "clear evasion of penal substitution in the language of penal substitution" (p. 5).
- **Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834): Emphasis on God-Consciousness and Moral Influence:**
 - Considered the "father of modern theology" (p. 6).
 - He emphasized feeling and the "consciousness of believers" (p. 6) as a primary theological canon.
 - Schleiermacher viewed Christ as unique due to the "constant potency of his God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in him" (p. 6).

- He rejected substitution and expiation, advocating an "exemplarist or moral influence view of the atonement," similar to Abelard.
- Christ's suffering was seen as "an absolutely self-denying love" (p. 7).
- **Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889): Ethical Kingdom and Exemplary Love:**
- A 19th-century liberal theologian who engaged more with biblical material than Schleiermacher but ultimately offered a more subjective view of the atonement.
- He stressed the "interrelatedness of Christ's person and work," seeing the "establishment of the kingdom of God in mainly ethical terms" (p. 7).
- Ritschl did not see Christ as bearing vicarious punishment. Instead, as priest, he represents the community, and as prophet and king, he conveys God's "exemplary love" (p. 7).
- Peterson highlights the difference between objective (Christ accomplished something outside of us) and subjective (Christ acted to move us within) views of the atonement, arguing that a proper understanding starts with the objective but moves towards the subjective.
- **Gustaf Aulen (1879-1977): Christus Victor:**
- Introduced a "third approach" to the atonement debate in his influential book *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement* (p. 8).
- This view focuses on Christ's atonement as a "divine conflict and victory" over evil forces. "Christ came, that he might destroy sin, overcome death, and give life to men" (quoting Irenaeus, p. 8).
- Aulen appealed to early church fathers and New Testament passages about ransom and evil powers (e.g., Mark 10:45, Colossians 2:15).
- Peterson agrees that the Christus Victor theme is biblical and important, noting it's evident even in Genesis 3:15 and Hebrews 2:15 ("through death, he might destroy the devil").
- However, he criticizes Aulen for overemphasizing this view, underplaying penal substitution in Luther and Calvin, and ignoring the sacrificial emphasis in Hebrews and the Old Testament.

- **Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014): Vicarious Death and Future Orientation:**
- Rightly interweaves the person and work of Christ.
- Affirmed Jesus' vicarious death "dying for us, for our sins" (p. 10), citing Mark 10:45, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Galatians 3:13.
- Saw Christ as the "new man, the eschatological Adam" and the "self-revelation of God" fully seen in his resurrection.
- Believed Christ's death was an "expiation for human sins" removing "the offense, the guilt, and the consequences" (p. 10).
- Affirmed the "vicarious penal suffering" of Christ based on his fellowship with sinners.
- Peterson, citing Robert Letham, notes a caution regarding Pannenberg's eschatological focus, where truths seem to be ultimately realized only in the future, potentially skewing the understanding of past events.

II. Introduction to Christology:

- **The Inseparability of Christ's Person and Work:**
- Classic New Testament passages like Philippians 2, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1 demonstrate that the person and work of Christ are inherently linked. "It is only because Christ is who he is that he could perform his saving work, and the very purpose of his coming and revealing his identity is for the sake of his mission, his cross, and resurrection" (p. 11).
- An orthodox understanding of the atonement requires an orthodox view of Christ's person, and a defective view of his person leads to a defective view of his saving work. This explains why cults denying Jesus' deity often resort to "autosoterism" (self-salvation) (p. 12).
- Systematic theology's separation of Christ's person and work for study is an "artificiality" necessary for understanding but must be reintegrated to avoid misrepresenting the unified reality.
- The death of Christ, central to Christianity, is a mystery intertwined with the mystery of the incarnation. "'The mystery of the incarnation lends its mystery to the cross'" (p. 13). The incomprehensibility of the God-man's death making atonement highlights the profound nature of the Christian faith.

- **Christ's Saving Work and the Trinity:**
- The saving work of Christ must be understood in the context of the Trinity (one God eternally existing as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, distinct but inseparable).
- While only the Son became incarnate and died, the work of atonement is, in a sense, the work of the Trinity.
- Scripture indicates the Father's involvement: "in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself" (2 Corinthians 5:18-19, p. 16).
- Hebrews 9:14 highlights the Holy Spirit's role: Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God" (p. 16-17). Peterson, supported by William Lane, interprets "eternal Spirit" as the Holy Spirit, signifying the absolute and efficacious nature of Christ's sacrifice.
- The Trinity's inseparable nature means that while Christ alone performed the atoning work, it was done according to the Father's will and through the power of the Holy Spirit, making it a Trinitarian act.
- **The Two States Doctrine (to be discussed in the next hour):** Mentioned as an important aspect of Christology (p. 17).

Quotes:

- "an immediate and vigorous protest against the forensic or legal and punitive, that is penal, view of the atonement so strongly stated by the reformers came in the form of the volume *De Jesu Christo Salvatore* by Faustus Socinus" (p. 1).
- "'If we could but get rid of this justice, even if we have no other proof, thus this fiction of Christ's satisfaction would be thoroughly exposed and would vanish.'" (Socinus, quoted on p. 2).
- "'There is no such justice in God as requires absolutely and inexorably that sin be punished and such as God himself cannot repudiate.'" (Socinus, quoted on p. 2).
- "It is not on the cross...but in heaven that he makes oblation." (Socinus, p. 2).
- "Christ takes away sins not by making atonement for them on the cross, according to Socinus, but by reason of the fact he's able to move men by his most ample promises to exercise that penitence whereby their sins are blotted out." (p. 2).
- "'it is not something inward in God or in the divine will and nature, but only the effect of his will.'" (Grotius, quoted on p. 4).

- "all positive laws are relaxable." (Grotius, quoted on p. 5).
- "it is essential to punishment that it be inflicted for sin, but not usually essential that it be inflicted on the sinner himself." (Grotius, quoted on p. 5).
- "the substitute for a penalty." (Grotius, quoted on p. 5, describing Christ's death).
- "that the peculiar and exclusive activity of the Redeemer implies each other, and we are inseparably one in the self-consciousness of believers." (Schleiermacher, quoted on p. 6).
- "the Redeemer then is like all men in virtue of the identity of human nature but is distinguished from them all by the constant potency of his God-consciousness, which was a veritable existence of God in him." (Schleiermacher, quoted on p. 6).
- "an absolutely self-denying love." (Schleiermacher, describing Christ's suffering, p. 7).
- "Christ came, that he might destroy sin, overcome death, and give life to men." (Irenaeus, quoted on p. 8, cited by Aulen).
- "only God himself could be behind this event." (Pannenberg, quoted on p. 10).
- "it could only be understood as dying for us, for our sins." (Pannenberg, on the cross, quoted on p. 10).
- "the offense, the guilt, and the consequences." (Pannenberg, on what Christ's death removes, quoted on p. 10).
- "the innocent suffered the penalty of death." (Pannenberg, quoted on p. 10).
- "It is only because Christ is who he is that he could perform his saving work..." (p. 11).
- "The mystery of the incarnation lends its mystery to the cross." (p. 13).
- "in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself..." (2 Corinthians 5:19, p. 16).
- "...the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God..." (Hebrews 9:14, p. 17).

Conclusion:

Session 5 provides a valuable historical overview of various perspectives on the atonement that emerged after the Reformation, highlighting both orthodox and heterodox views. It emphasizes the crucial link between Christology and soteriology, asserting that a proper understanding of Christ's saving work necessitates a correct understanding of his person and the Trinitarian context in which he acted. The session sets the stage for further exploration of Christology by focusing on the inseparability of Christ's person and work and the Trinitarian dimension of his saving act, leading into the discussion of the two states of Christ in the subsequent session.

4. Study Guide: Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 5, Introduction, Part 5, History of Doctrine, Christology

Christ's Saving Work: A Study Guide

Quiz

1. Describe Faustus Socinus' view of sin and how it impacted his understanding of the atonement.
2. Explain Hugo Grotius' governmental theory of the atonement and how it differed from the penal substitution view held by the Reformers.
3. According to Schleiermacher, what is the significance of Christ, and what did he emphasize in religious experience?
4. How did Albrecht Ritschl view the atonement, and with which historical figure's perspective did his views align more closely?
5. Summarize Gustaf Aulen's "Christus Victor" view of the atonement and which historical figure he believed also held this view.
6. According to Wolfhart Pannenberg, how did Jesus' death on the cross function, and what crucial event provided the full understanding of it?
7. Why is an orthodox view of the person of Christ considered essential for an orthodox understanding of his saving work?
8. Explain the artificiality inherent in systematic theology when studying the person and work of Christ.
9. Describe the relationship between the saving work of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity, noting which person of the Trinity became incarnate.
10. According to the lecture, which biblical passage explicitly mentions the Holy Spirit's involvement in Christ's offering of himself to God?

Quiz Answer Key

1. Socinus viewed sin in a Pelagian fashion, believing Adam was merely a bad example. Consequently, he denied the imputation of Adam's sin and that Christ's death had any atoning value, as he also denied Christ's deity.
2. Grotius' governmental theory posits that Christ's death was a signal exhibition of God's regard for the law within his moral government, rather than a penal

substitution. He believed God relaxed the law and Christ's suffering was a "substitute for a penalty" to uphold the law's reverence.

3. For Schleiermacher, Christ's significance lay in his constant potency of God-consciousness, making him a unique example. He emphasized feeling and the consciousness of believers as central to religious experience and rejected notions of substitution and expiation.
4. Ritschl viewed the atonement as more subjective, emphasizing moral influence similar to Abelard. He saw Christ establishing the kingdom of God in ethical terms through his role as prophet, priest, and king, without Christ bearing vicarious punishment.
5. Aulen's "Christus Victor" view describes the atonement as Christ's victory over evil forces, a divine conflict and conquest. He believed this was the classic view of the New Testament and the church fathers, including Martin Luther.
6. Pannenberg declared that Jesus died a vicarious death for our sins, emphasizing the substitutionary nature of his sacrifice as an expiation that removes the offense, guilt, and consequences of sin. The full understanding of this death is seen only in the light of his resurrection.
7. An orthodox view of Christ's person, particularly his deity, is essential because only God can ultimately save. A defective view of his person leads to a defective understanding of his saving work, often resulting in attempts at self-salvation (autosoterism).
8. Systematic theology artificially separates the person and work of Christ for the sake of better understanding their individual aspects. However, this separation is artificial because in Scripture and reality, the two are inseparable and must be put back together for a complete understanding.
9. The saving work of Christ is understood in light of the Trinity because although only the Son became incarnate and performed the atoning work, the three persons of the Trinity are inseparable. Therefore, Christ's work is seen as being done with the involvement and will of the Father and the Holy Spirit.
10. Hebrews 9:14 explicitly states that Christ "through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God," indicating the Holy Spirit's involvement in Christ's atoning sacrifice.

Essay Format Questions

1. Compare and contrast the views of the atonement held by Anselm and Faustus Socinus. How did their differing understandings of Christ's person influence their views on his saving work?
2. Analyze the significance of Gustaf Aulen's "Christus Victor" view in the history of the doctrine of the atonement. How did it challenge or complement traditional objective and subjective views?
3. Discuss the relationship between the person and work of Christ as presented in the lecture and in Philippians 2 or Colossians 1. Why is this inseparability crucial for a proper understanding of salvation?
4. Evaluate Hugo Grotius' governmental theory of the atonement. In what ways did it attempt to bridge or diverge from the penal substitutionary understanding, and what are some potential strengths or weaknesses of this view?
5. Explore the implications of understanding Christ's saving work in light of the Trinity. How does the involvement of the Father and the Holy Spirit, even though only the Son became incarnate, enrich our understanding of the atonement?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Atonement:** The work Christ did in his life and death to reconcile humanity to God, dealing with the problem of sin.
- **Penal Substitution:** A view of the atonement where Christ died in the place of sinners, bearing the penalty (divine wrath) that they deserved for their sins.
- **Ransom to Satan Theory:** An early church view that Christ's death was a ransom paid to Satan to redeem humanity from his bondage.
- **Deification (Theosis):** Predominant in the East, this view emphasizes Christ's work as enabling believers to become more like God.
- **Satisfaction Theory:** Anselm's view that Christ's death provided satisfaction to God's honor, which was offended by human sin.
- **Moral Influence Theory:** Abelard's view that Christ's death was primarily a demonstration of God's love intended to move people to repentance and love.

- **Forensic/Legal View:** Another term for the penal substitution view, emphasizing the legal aspects of sin and Christ's payment of the penalty.
- **Pelagianism:** A heresy denying original sin and asserting that humans have the free will to choose good and can earn salvation through their own efforts.
- **Arianism:** A heresy denying the full deity of Christ, considering him a created being subordinate to the Father.
- **Unitarianism:** A theological movement that rejects the doctrine of the Trinity, believing in one God in one person.
- **Governmental Theory of the Atonement (Grotian View):** Hugo Grotius' view that Christ's death was a demonstration of God's justice and a deterrent to sin within his moral government, rather than a direct payment for sins.
- **Pietism:** A Protestant movement emphasizing personal faith, religious experience, and practical godliness.
- **Romanticism:** An artistic and intellectual movement emphasizing emotion, individualism, and the beauty of nature.
- **God-consciousness:** Schleiermacher's central idea that religion is rooted in a feeling of absolute dependence on God, and Christ possessed a uniquely potent God-consciousness.
- **Exemplarist View:** A view of the atonement that emphasizes Christ's life and death as a perfect example for humanity to follow.
- **Objective Atonement:** Views that emphasize what Christ accomplished outside of humanity, such as satisfying God's justice or defeating sin and death.
- **Subjective Atonement:** Views that emphasize the internal impact of Christ's work on individuals, such as moral influence or inspiring faith.
- **Christus Victor:** Gustaf Aulen's view of the atonement as Christ's victory over the powers of evil, sin, and death.
- **Penal Example:** The idea that Christ's suffering served as a public example of the punishment that sin deserves, without being the actual penal substitution.
- **Autosoterism:** The belief that one can achieve salvation through their own efforts or works.

- **Systematic Theology:** A discipline of Christian theology that formulates an orderly, rational, and coherent account of Christian beliefs.
- **Exegesis:** The critical interpretation and explanation of biblical texts.
- **Biblical Theology:** A discipline that seeks to understand the progressive unfolding of God's plan throughout the Bible.
- **Historical Theology:** The study of how Christian doctrines have developed throughout church history.
- **Trinity:** The Christian doctrine that God is one being in three co-equal and co-eternal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- **Incarnation:** The doctrine that the eternal Son of God became human in the person of Jesus Christ.
- **Hypostasis:** A Greek term used to refer to the individual reality or essence of a person, often translated as "nature" or "essential being."
- **Theophany:** A visible manifestation of God to humanity.
- **Patipassianism:** An early Christian heresy that claimed the Father suffered on the cross.
- **Two States Doctrine:** The Reformed theological concept that Christ existed in two states: his state of humiliation (incarnation, suffering, death, burial) and his state of exaltation (resurrection, ascension, session at God's right hand, return in glory).
- **Three Offices of Christ:** The traditional Reformed understanding of Christ's work as prophet, priest, and king.

5. FAQs on Peterson, Christ's Saving Work, Session 5, Introduction, Part 5, History of Doctrine, Christology, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on the History of Atonement Doctrine and Christology

1. What was the predominant view of the atonement in the early church, and how did it differ between the East and West? In the early church, the "ransom to Satan" view predominated in the West. This perspective generally held that Christ's death was a ransom paid to Satan to secure humanity's release from his bondage. In the East, the concept of "deification" (theosis) was more prominent, emphasizing Christ's work as elevating humanity to participate in the divine nature. However, it's important to note that both East and West had more complex theological landscapes than these simple categorizations suggest.

2. Who was Faustus Socinus, and what were his key objections to the Reformation's view of the atonement? Faustus Socinus (1539-1604) was a key figure who vigorously protested against the forensic (legal) and punitive (penal) view of the atonement strongly stated by the Reformers like Luther and Calvin. He authored "De Jesu Christo Salvatore" (Concerning Jesus Christ the Savior) to refute these views. Socinus denied Christ's deity and, consequently, the atoning value of his death. He held a Pelagian view of sin (Adam as a bad example) and an Arian view of Christ (denying his full deity). He also rejected the idea of divine justice requiring punishment, arguing that God's will and mercy were paramount, making Christ's satisfaction unnecessary for forgiveness. For Socinus, Christ was primarily an announcer and supreme example of salvation, with his saving significance residing in his heavenly life rather than his death on the cross.

3. What is the "governmental theory" of the atonement associated with Hugo Grotius, and how does it differ from penal substitution? Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) developed the governmental theory of the atonement as a response to both Socinianism and the strict penal substitution view. While Grotius agreed with the Reformers that some form of satisfaction was necessary for God to justly exercise mercy, he differed by asserting that God's justice is not an inherent necessity but rather an effect of his will. He viewed God primarily as a ruler rather than a judge. In this framework, Christ's death was not the exact penal substitution that sinners deserved, but rather a "substitute for a penalty"—a signal exhibition of God's regard for the law and the heinousness of sin, necessary to maintain God's moral government. God "relaxed" the law, and Christ's

suffering served as an example of the punishment sin deserves, rather than the actual bearing of that punishment for sinners.

4. How did Friedrich Schleiermacher and Albrecht Ritschl, as liberal theologians, view the atonement? Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), considered the father of modern theology, emphasized feeling and the "God-consciousness" within believers. He rejected notions of substitution and expiation, advocating an exemplarist or moral influence view of the atonement, similar to Abelard. For Schleiermacher, Christ's suffering was primarily an act of "absolutely self-denying love," serving as a moral example to inspire believers. Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889) took more account of biblical material but ultimately leaned towards a more subjective understanding of the atonement, again with similarities to Abelard. He stressed the interrelatedness of Christ's person and work in establishing the kingdom of God in ethical terms. While acknowledging Christ's sufferings as part of his threefold office (prophet, priest, king), Ritschl denied that Christ bore vicarious punishment, viewing his role as representing the community and conveying God's exemplary love.

5. What is Gustaf Aulen's "Christus Victor" view of the atonement, and what are its strengths and weaknesses according to the source? Gustaf Aulen (1879-1977) introduced the "Christus Victor" view, which he considered the classic and dramatic view of the New Testament and the church fathers. This view presents Christ's atonement as a divine conflict and victory over evil forces, including sin and death. Aulen emphasized Christ's work in destroying sin and overcoming the tyrants holding humanity in bondage, appealing to figures like Irenaeus and New Testament passages about ransom and evil powers. The strength of this view is its revival of a biblical theme often underemphasized by both liberal and conservative theologies, providing encouragement to believers struggling with various bondages. However, the source critiques Aulen for overdoing it and oversimplifying the views of the Church Fathers, Luther, Calvin, and the Bible by presenting Christus Victor as the *only* view. While Luther and Calvin did teach Christus Victor, penal substitution was also a significant aspect of their theologies, particularly for Calvin and in the book of Hebrews.

6. How does the source describe Wolfhart Pannenberg's understanding of the atonement?

Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-2014) is described as rightly interweaving the person and work of Christ. He affirmed that only God himself could be behind Christ's coming and that Jesus died a vicarious death for our sins. Pannenberg saw Christ as the "new man," the eschatological Adam, and the self-revelation of God fully understood in light of his resurrection. He believed Christ's death was an expiation for human sins, removing their offense, guilt, and consequences. Pannenberg emphasized the vicarious penal suffering of Christ, grounded in his fellowship with sinners. While acknowledging the positive aspects of Pannenberg's theology, the source, citing Robert Letham, raises a caution regarding the relationship between his emphasis on the future and the present reality of these truths.

7. Why does the source emphasize the inseparability of the person and work of Christ, and what are the implications of this for understanding the atonement?

The source stresses that the person and work of Christ are inseparable in Scripture and in our understanding. Classic New Testament passages like Philippians 2, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1 consistently present Christ's identity and his saving actions together. It is only because Christ is who he is (the God-man) that he could perform his saving work. Consequently, an orthodox view of Christ's person is essential for an orthodox understanding of his atonement, and a defective view of his person inevitably leads to a defective view of his saving work. This inseparability highlights the profound mystery of how the death of the God-man could atone for the sins of humanity, linking the mystery of the incarnation to the mystery of the cross.

8. How does the doctrine of the Trinity relate to the saving work of Christ? The saving work of Christ, while uniquely performed by the Son in his incarnation, is also understood in light of the Trinity. Although the Father did not become incarnate and the Holy Spirit could not die, the three persons of the Trinity are distinguished but never separated, as there is one God. Therefore, Christ's work of atonement is, in a sense, the work of the Trinity. The source points to biblical passages like 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, which speaks of God reconciling the world to himself through Christ, and Hebrews 9:14, which states that Christ offered himself to God through the eternal Spirit. These verses indicate that while the Son alone became incarnate and died, the Father was the one being reconciled, and the Holy Spirit was instrumental in Christ's offering, highlighting the unified action of the triune God in salvation.