

Grace Bible Church
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Tree Of Life
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“Understanding The Substitutionary Spiritual Death Of Christ”

In this synopsis we will examine the following:

- Difference between real and substitutionary spiritual death
- Condemnation must precede salvation
- Look at the BIG picture
- 3 systems or means of perception
- Believe, then see – faith is the means of spiritual perception
- Faith is the only non-meritorious system
- Mechanics of the SSD (Point 4: the HOW)
- God’s attributes are inviolable and harmonious
- Free will and judicial imputation
- Christ gave His life willingly
- We all fail but the righteous man gets up!

Before we begin our study:

Let us prepare ourselves to make the most of the most important thing we do as believers – perceiving, metabolizing, and applying the word of God. We know that unless we are filled with the Holy spirit we can not metabolize, or assimilate into our soul, God’s word, and that whenever we sin we lose the filling of the Spirit by grieving (**Eph 4:30**) or quenching (**1Ths 5:19**) and we must recover by naming and citing our known sins to God, at which time He is faithful and righteous to forgive them and cleanse us of unknown or forgotten sins (**1Jo 1:9**). In this way we ensure we are filled with the Spirit and prepared to have Him teach our spirit (**Joh 4:24, 14:26**).

Now with that taken care of, we are ready to resume our study of the Doctrine of Substitutionary Spiritual Death (SSD) of our Lord who was our substitute and took judgment for our sins upon Himself in His very body. Previously we covered the first two points:

Point 1: categories of spiritual death – substitutionary and real.

Point 2: definition of substitutionary spiritual death; word study of Greek ‘**huper**’

We will continue to examine huper today as we look at our 3rd point:

Point 3: The Difference between real and substitutionary spiritual death.

The simplified difference is that Real Spiritual Death, or RSD going forward, and Substitutionary Spiritual Death, or SSD, is that RSD refers to the spiritual death of one who has sin and is therefore condemned based on their own condition, whereas SSD is the spiritual death of one who is innocent and not condemned on behalf of another (huper).

ONLY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST WILL EVER EXPERIENCE THE SSD! He is the unique person of the universe, Adonai echad – One – Unique! Uniquely begotten of the Father – monogenes – one gene – unique nature, no other like it. He is the only Person who could be our substitute, hence

Joh 14:6 “I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”

Even though we had never yet committed a sin at the moment of birth, we are born in sin because we carry the genetically formed sin nature in

every cell. We are born in a *condition* of sin. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin so that He would not receive the sin nature which is passed on through the male chromosome, owing to the fact that the man (Adam) sinned willfully and knowingly, while the woman (Eve) was deceived. Our Lord Jesus is also the ONLY human being who was or will ever be born without one, and that includes the virgin Mary! Certain religions deify Mary but this is blasphemy! She is not the mother of God, she is the mother of the humanity of Christ, the deity of Christ has no mother:

Joh 1:1-5 **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.**

Joh 1:14 **And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

If Mary was without sin, then she could have been our substitute! There is only one Lamb without spot or blemish. Let us be crystal clear on this point!

Now, because we all inherit Adam's sin nature through our genes, we are in sin, as in a state of sin, that is our condition. We are born condemned. So we experience RSD, because sin is in us, and condemnation by it. It seems unfair to the human mind and according to human standards of justice, but human viewpoint only looks at part of the picture – the temporal part. We only see a small part of even that! But the entire universe is nothing more than a terrarium for created beings – a

temporal and finite reality. But God is infinite and eternal, and the temporal and finite reality is subordinate to the eternal, and the visible to the invisible. If we want to try to understand God's plan, we need to understand God and His essence, and we need to understand the temporal in the context of the eternal, not the other way around! You can't fit infinity into a jar. You must look at the jar as it fits into infinity. So to simplify: look at the BIG PICTURE.

Condemnation must precede Salvation.

Would you say it is better to be born free and end up a slave, or to be born a slave and end up free? I think the answer ought to be pretty unanimous. The person who is born free doesn't really understand or appreciate freedom the way one does who has been a slave and has been set free. Just look at our perfect free-born ancestors – Adam and Eve! How did they fare? So God allowed the fall to happen because He already had a solution prepared in eternity past. *Please check out Pastor McLaughlin's studies on John which deals with the Doctrine of the Divine Decrees in great detail – which refers to the order in which these things happen for us experientially in time, and will give you a clearer understanding of the BIG PICTURE than we can give you here. But the point is:

If you want to understand God's plan in this moment, you must understand God's plan for eternity.

So, sin came before salvation, because God had a plan. We can rest in that and relax. God provided a solution to the problem caused by man's free will and his abuse of it by way of negative volition – he chose to disobey God and to obey his body and his self-interest. Which let's face it, we all do! Even if we weren't born condemned, we have chosen to sin over and

over and the sin nature only provides temptation, it does not force us to sin. We CHOOSE, with our volition, to listen to it – just like granddaddy Adam did! This is why we are under RSD – REAL spiritual death.

Jesus Christ's SSD on the cross generated *potential* for salvation. This means that we have an option. But God does not violate or coerce our volition. The big picture is that all creation will see when the movie ends that nobody goes to the lake of fire but by their own negative volition – not just one choice, but many many choices to go against God's desires for all to be reconciled and defiantly insist on emancipation. The lake of fire represents total independence from God – since every good thing comes from God! Hell is the total absence of grace – which includes comfort, relief, providence, etc. God gives us chance after chance, but if we don't want it, He gives us what we want in the end. He is a gentleman.

There are three ways in which human beings perceive reality:

1. faith - "I believe it without seeing based on trust in the source"
(antithetical to empiricism)

2. empiricism - "I'll believe it when I see it; if I can't see it, it's not real" (antithetical to faith)

3. rationalism - "I think therefore I am; I trust my mind/thought foremost" (synthesis of the prior)

Faith is the first method of perception in life. A baby can not reason or rationalize. Whatever the parents tell them they must believe, because they have no means or basis for confirming or denying what they are told, and no reason to disbelieve. You tell them there is a nation called Japan and Japanese people live there, they believe you. Remember that

Jesus tells the disciples that they must become “like little children”? (**Mt 18:3**)

Empiricism and rationalism are the backbone of the world system. Empiricism means sensory input: what we see, hear, taste, touch, smell. Science is based on observation of empirically sensed phenomena and rational attempts to explain them, followed by experiments designed to prove whether the explanation is legit or not. Science relies on both but excludes faith. The cosmic system essentially says to mankind: “are you going to believe in stories of the invisible and unprovable or what is right in front of you, what you can see and touch and smell and hear? Will you trust in rules imposed by unseen beings or trust in what your body says? We listen to the body! The body and the brain and emotions rule! The world system is based on the material reality. But as believers we rely on faith as a means of perceiving what can not be perceived by empiricism or rationalism, to the bafflement of the godless (**1Co 2:14**) and according to

Heb 1:11 Now faith is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen

The late great Col Thieme Jr used the analogy of algebra, where we solve for the unknown ‘X’ by what is known, as in $2x = 10$. Since we know that $2 \times 5 = 10$, then we can identify the unknown by its relationship to the known. I also like the analogy of a black hole: black holes are invisible, because light can not escape their gravity, and we see not the object but the light that bounces off of it, so if no light bounces off, we can’t see it! But we can still perceive and identify the black hole by the effect it has on the visible matter circling around it and the other rays that are produced by the cataclysm in its core. God can be perceived in this way. We all see

His hand in our lives and those of others. We see the effects. Jesus says in **Joh 3:8** (for the less nerdy believers lol)

The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is everyone who is born of the Spirit.

You can't see the wind but you can feel it and see the leaves it carries through the air!

But what is the point of all this? The point is that of the three means of perception, only one is what we call "non-meritorious". This word means that we don't get any credit, we don't do anything that has any merit on our part or requires any effort. Anyone at any time in any place and any condition, moral, immoral, amoral, old, young, abled, disabled, healthy, sick, strong, weak, etc., can believe. Nobody can believe better than another. You believe (I agree with God) or you don't believe (I disagree with God). Faith is non-meritorious – God does the work!

In the case of empiricism and rationalism, man takes credit. Those depend on sensory perception, so one person who can't smell is excluded, or someone who has a low IQ is excluded, and the person does the work and takes credit. So those are excluded from God's plan.

So the bible says, before salvation we have faith in the living Word, the Person - THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. After salvation our faith is in this book right here called the "written" word – the Word of God. Without faith we have no system of perception that meets the standards of God.

So you see, in substitutionary spiritual death, Christ had to be forsaken by God the Father, (because He was our substitute and God says "I can

have no fellowship with sin --- and He couldn't make an exception because of His justice, because perfect justice means NO EXCEPTIONS and no partiality) but He (God the Son – JESUS CHRIST) also had to remain perfect.

Again: sin cannot atone for sin! This is why in the OT the animals which were sacrificed had to be perfect in appearance, because this was symbolic or a type of the Messiah. One who has sin can not take the sins of the world onto themselves and be judged, because they have their own sin! Who will be judged for those? No, only TLJC, the sinless Man, the Lamb without spot or blemish (sin), could do this work. I hope it is clear!

Rom 5:12-13 Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Rom 5:15 But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.

Rom 5:21 "that, just as the sin nature ruled in the sphere of spiritual death [real spiritual death],

Why?? – Because where sin abounds – what abounds more? --- Grace abounds much more...

Do you see the difference between the SSD of JESUS CHRIST and all the blessing that are attached to that and then we see the RSD of adam and the condemnation that we are no longer in bondage to thanks to the

willingness of our Lord and Savior to “lay down His life for His friends” and He said that we were His friends, with a caveat, in

Joh 15:15 **No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.**

And He said right before that

Joh 15:13-14 **Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you.**

We are His friends if we honor Him and we honor Him by honoring His word and His commands, laying down our own lives for our friends – our Royal Family. Right now, if you are studying this, you are following one command – the command to not conform to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (**Rom 12:2**) so that we can know what is God’s will. You can’t do God’s will if you don’t know what it is!

Now, we move on to point 4:

Point 4. The Mechanics of the Substitutionary Spiritual Death.

What are the Mechanics, or the “how” part of the Substitutionary Spiritual Death of the Lord Jesus Christ? For example, and this is a question that we have been asked and answered in one of our Q&A sessions:

Why did it take just three hours for billions of sins to be judged on the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ?

This is a good question to highlight what would fall under the “mechanics” category. The easy and simple answer is: God is omnipotent! But it wouldn’t be much of a study if we copped out and left it at that. What we will examine is God’s divine attributes and how they relate to and how they facilitated the unique – as in one time only for all eternity – SSD of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on the cross at Calvary.

So we begin with the fact that the omnipotence of God the Father *judicially* imputed all the sins in human history to the impeccable (sinless) humanity of Christ. God the Father is acting as judge here, as in a legal court case or a trial. There is a judicial backdrop to the entirety of history since the fall of Satan and the resulting conflict which we call “The Angelic Conflict.” This conflict is the basis or *raison d’être* of the existence of mankind and human history. We were created to resolve – once and for all – this prehistoric conflict between God and His elect angels and Satan and his fallen angels. God will bring about a resolution which will show that the entirety of history proves beyond any doubt or debate that God was and is righteous, just, fair, and loving, and that all His judgments are perfectly just and true. Sometimes the best way to show that someone is wrong is to let them do it their way and fail, and then they have the opportunity to learn and move forward *willingly* and without reservations or resentments. But this judicial context is why the Bible is so full of legal terms like “witness” and “judge” and even “Satan” which derives from ‘ha satan’ which was a term for an accuser or one who brings charges against another, as a prosecuting attorney. We know that Satan “accuses the brethren (believers) day and night (**Rv 12:10**).

So we see that Jesus is offered up as proof eternal of God's love for us and His desire for all to come to repentance (change of mind/attitude, i.e. God was right and I was wrong, I accept His offer of grace) and be saved, as well as His willingness to sacrifice of Himself in order to provide a way for that to take place. But He also demonstrates His matchless grace in giving us the choice, and this is the answer to the question, "If it's God's desire for all to be saved, then why aren't we all saved?" We see that if God forces everyone to do what He wants, it doesn't resolve the Angelic Conflict, because the whole point is that Satan and his followers (and all human unbelievers alike) CHOSE with their own independent agency to disobey God and refused to reconcile. Choice and agency are the issue because with agency comes *responsibility* and *accountability*. If Satan says he didn't have a choice and everything was God's fault as the creator, which human beings are also fond of saying, God says FALSE – I gave you a free and independent will, and thereby made you the author of your own destiny - that makes your choices fully your own responsibility. This incidentally is one of the quintessential irreconcilable differences between Western aka Judeo-Christian or "conservative" thinking and post-modern/leftist/progressive thinking. The latter all deny free will and responsibility and create boogymen to blame their problems on, just like Satan. But I digress.

God doesn't want automatons who can't choose, or else He would have made us that way! Freedom is God's policy, and that is why it must be man's policy. You can not force love, it must be a choice, or else it is phony and false. God does not desire false shows or false love! You can see now if you look at the world system aka the cosmic system and its humanistic evangelists how they ceaselessly and tirelessly endeavor to deny free will by any means necessary – this is not a coincidence and it does without a doubt have spiritual importance in the Angelic Conflict! It is a denial of God's veracity and authority and His decrees and His

judgment of Satan and mankind, and it is, whether anyone realizes it or not, a contract of alliance with Satan. Since we understand “baptism” correctly as “identification with someone or something”, we can even say that to deny free will and personal responsibility IS a baptism of Satan and the KOD (kingdom of darkness). Satan’s legal defense rests on the “it’s all God’s fault/God are a fraud or liar” rationale (right from Genesis 1 we see this!). But understand, when you disagree with God, you agree with Satan and are knowingly or unknowingly unified with him against God. Serious stuff!

God is love – but He is not *only* love; He is also justice, righteousness, veracity, holiness. These attributes are not ranked and they do not overrule one another but rather work together in perfect harmony. God’s love does not mean he can ignore justice, and God’s justice does not mean he can ignore love – either of those would represent a violation of His own perfect character. We like to focus on power but it is God’s *character and integrity* which make Him GOD and allow Him to rule perfectly. Power without perfect character and integrity are the devil, and this is why the devil could never rule effectively, and why no human can either, unless He lets God rule Him and acts according to His perfect will. This is important to understand and the vast majority of believers today do not understand these things and much confusion and doubt results from it, especially regarding the SSD and the cross, which is the centerpiece of our entire faith!

So, God the Father was acting as a judge, and as a judge He used His power – His omnipotence – and He imputed every single sin in human history to the “impeccable humanity” of Christ. This is part of why we need to learn to look at things from the divine viewpoint rather than the human viewpoint. Our viewpoint is based in the limited, finite, temporal reality, with restrictions and laws and barriers. When we look at the

Bible from that perspective, we have to say, “how can these things be?” We don’t believe that they could be possible. But how foolish to judge what God does based on the rules of the universe (the terrarium) that HE MADE, as if He is bound by them? He is not! If you believe that God is real and that He is the creator of all that exists, then you must believe also that He is able to do all things!

Remember what we said earlier about faith – we believe *without seeing* based on what? Based on the belief that God is real and that the Bible is His revelation of Himself and His truth to us. We believe the Bible because we believe God, and so we base our thinking on that point of view instead of our own worldly/fleshly one. That is faith in action.

Judicial imputation of sins means Jesus was judged for sins which He did not commit by God the Father acting as a judge in a criminal prosecution. I said before that God’s love doesn’t negate or overrule His justice. So God’s love can’t say to justice, “let’s let this sin slide.” If God ever let even one sin slide, His perfect – meaning absolutely 100% uncompromised – justice would be violated, and He would no longer be perfect God. He would become fallen! This is the one thing God can’t do: He can’t deny Himself, He can’t violate Himself, He cannot fail to be faithful, He can not change, He can not lie – He can not violate His character! So God’s justice says “these sins must be judged.” But sin can’t pay for sin. You can’t clean a dirty dish with a dirty cloth. This is why the animals in the OT had to be “without spot or blemish” which symbolizes sin, and so Jesus was the Lamb without spot or blemish – without sin – which the Levitical offerings pointed to. Jesus Christ willingly sacrificed His humanity on the altar so that our sins could be wiped away and would never again be a barrier between man and God. This is also signified in the veil which separated the Holy of Holies where Jesus Christ as the Shekinah Glory dwelled in the tabernacle during the OT, being split at the time of Jesus’

death. The veil of sin was removed once and for all! How awesome is that?!

So, God's love wants us to be saved, but God's justice needs sin to be judged. They can not override one another. God has a problem. Impersonal love, or virtue-love, is the problem-solving device. He loves His enemies (us) – impersonally. based on His own virtue – and is able to overcome this problem and solve it through the SSD of Jesus Christ! And Jesus – in His humanity – did all this by operating inside the PPOG and utilizing the 8 PSD's which are applicable for Him, and relying on the enabling power of God the Holy Spirit, as our prototype. In other words, He used the same system which God has made available to every believer in the Church Age, so that no physical, mental/intellectual, genetic, financial, class, or any other inequality are no longer a hindrance as they might be in the worldly realm.

Heb 12:2 Fixing our eyes on Jesus (PSD #10 – Occupation with Christ), **the founder and perfecter of our doctrine** (pistis – what is believed), **who because of the joy set before Him** (+H, PSD #9 – sharing the happiness of God), **endured the cross, disregarding the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the Father.**

The Lord Jesus Christ made a decision – with His own free will and independent agency, remember the court case - to stand in the gap for all humanity and receive the judgment that God the Father was pouring out on the sins of the entire human race. Every day, every time we choose to operate in God's plan, we stand in the gap. Every time we operate in negative volition, we say "I don't care, I want to do my own thing." Better thank God and Jesus Christ that He didn't think that! No, He willingly gave up His desires and interests and plans and His very life itself. He "died daily" to Himself.

Joh 10:17 For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.

“I lay down My life” is reference to the cross, and “so that I may take it again” is a reference to resurrection.

“No one” means just that: not Pontius Pilate, nor the Emperor himself, not the Pharisees and Saducees, nor Satan, nor any force in creation; No one took Christ’s life, but He gave it willingly. This is what those who mocked Him, saying “If you’re the Son of God, come down off that cross!” could not comprehend. Self-sacrifice of this magnitude is so totally foreign to the sin nature that it is literally incomprehensible to the natural mind!

As I said before, Jesus in His humanity was able to do this unbelievable thing through the same modus operandi which God has provided to all of us – the PPOG, including the enabling power of the Holy Spirit. We only fail because we fail to use what God gave us! This is why something like fear can be a sin: God gave us a way to overcome sin! So when we do not overcome it, it is only because we have failed to keep His commands and “grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (**2Pe 3:18**) or to “consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing” (**Jm 1:2-4**).

But the unfortunate truth is that most believers never even learn about the unique spiritual opportunities of the Church Age, or anything about the Angelic Conflict, or the Predesigned Plan of God, or PPOG. They live their entire lives outside of God's plan, assuming and guessing and stumbling and fumbling, groping in the dark, indistinguishable from unbelievers. What a shame! But even worse, many of those who do learn about these things fail to stay with it, getting tired, getting demoralized, getting distracted by the endless attractions and pleasures and preoccupations and worries of the cosmic system. They get waylaid. They quit or give up for so many reasons. Some get too caught up in their failures or their failure to quit failing (!!!) and go AWOL. But the worst failure of all is the failure to get back up and never give up.

Pro 24:16 For a righteous person falls seven times and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of disaster.

This is why the first problem solving device is rebound and recover! God knows what we need AND when we need it. He knows the formula for reaching spiritual maturity and autonomy. The first PSD is the one we will lean on the most in our immaturity and that is why it is first! It exists so that we can exercise our volition to *choose* to keep going. Sin costs us the filling ministry of the HS. If not for PSD #1 we would not be able to move forward. If we use it as a license to sin, we will fail and be loser believers forever, and losers who knew better!

Here is the full list just for repetition's sake:

- 1) Rebound and Recovery.**
- 2) The filling of the Holy Spirit.**
- 3) The Faith Rest Life.**
- 4) Grace Orientation.**

- 5) Doctrinal Orientation.**
- 6) A Personal Sense of Destiny.**
- 7) Personal Love for God the Father.**
- 8) Impersonal, Unconditional Love for all Mankind.**
- 9) Contentment and Perfect Happiness.**
- 10) Occupation with Christ.**

They are in the perfect sequence according to the need and capacity of the growing believer. That's why we have to reach forth to the things that are ahead and forget the things that lie behind us (**Php 3:13**). Forget about your past, your mistakes, your failures. You must not only rebound but you must *isolate* the sins, and how do you do that? You forget them. God has blotted them out, but that isn't good enough for some of us! Our sin nature may have a trend toward guilt and self-reproach or self-pity and we think we need to make some big show (of self) before God, we think we must feel guilty and flagellate (scourge) ourselves, we must make penance...certain religions actually promote this kind of blasphemous emotional nonsense. This only causes chain-sinning because the more we focus on our failure and see ourselves as failures the more we resign to it and whatever is foremost in our stream of consciousness is what we are going to be attracted to and what we are going to manifest. So if all we think about is sin, we are going to sin! When we rebound, we **MUST** forget what lies behind – no, really actually do forget it! - and look forward toward the goal. This is essential.

Think about the fact that you can pinch yourself right now – go ahead and pinch yourself right now – **CAN YOU FEEL THAT?** That means you are still alive, and if you're still alive, you're still in God's plan. He hasn't given up on you yet. Your life still has value to Him. So other people think you're useless or vain or whatever it may be (or you just think they do because you are paranoid and self-absorbed)? Other people do not

matter! They don't control history and they don't sustain your life (contrary to what they may think lol), God does. God matters. And your life ALWAYS has value to God, that never changes no matter how much you fail because God doesn't see you in your condition but in your position – IN CHRIST. So, buck up, buckaroo! Pastor likes to say

“Winners never quit and quitters never win!”

And it is a trustworthy statement, worthy of full acceptance! Next time we will look at point 5

Point 5. The Old Testament Analogy to the Efficacious Substitutionary Spiritual Death of Christ on the Cross.