

13. Provide an explanation of and the biblical basis for the doctrine of substitutionary atonement, explaining the implications of this doctrine for human guilt over sin.

I. Breakdown the Question

- A. Define and explain the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.
 - 1. Provide a biblical basis for the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.
- B. Define Guilt.
- C. Explain the implications of this doctrine (substitutionary atonement) for human guilt over sin.

II. Define and explain the doctrine of substitutionary atonement.

- A. The doctrine of substitutionary atonement teaches that all of mankind is separated from God due to original sin, as well as the commission of our own sins. That God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on flesh and dwelt among us, lived the perfect life, eventually dying on a sinner's death cross. He placed all the guilt for mankind's sin upon himself (substitute), and paid the entire penalty for that sin, all that was owed (atonement). He did this in order to make a way of salvation for all of mankind because of his love and mercy for us.
- B. Grudem "We may define the atonement as follows: The atonement is the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation."¹
 - 1. **Romans 3:10-12** as it is written: "*None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good not even one.*"
 - 2. **Romans 3:23-24** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.
- C. Lambert "The obedience of Jesus solves only part of the problem we face as human beings and sinners who must confront a holy God. To be acceptable to God, we need positive righteousness. Additionally, we need to be rid of the penalty of God's wrath that is due to us because of our sin. Without the payment of our sin, we could never be acceptable to a holy God who cannot look upon sin."²
- D. Grudem "The four terms show how Christ's death met the four needs we have as sinners:
 - 1. We deserve to *die* as the penalty for sin.
 - 2. We deserve to *bear God's wrath* against sin.
 - 3. We are *separated* from God by our sins.
 - 4. We are in *bondage to sin* and to the kingdom of Satan.These four needs are met by Christ's death in the following ways:"³

¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 568.

² Heath Lambert, *A Theology of Biblical Counseling*, 147.

³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 580.

ACBC Theology - Question 13

(Summarized below – More info can be found in Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology p. 580)

(1) Sacrifice – Heb 9:26; 2 Cor 5:21

1 Peter 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*

(2) Propitiation – 1 John 4:10

1 John 2:2 *He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*

(3) Reconciliation – 2 Cor 5:18-19

2 Corinthians 5:17-19 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.*

(4) Redemption – Rom 6:11, 14

Colossians 1:13-14 *He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

- E. Grudem “But the justice of God also required that God find a way that the penalty due to us for our sins would be paid (for he could not accept us into fellowship with himself unless the penalty was paid).”⁴
1. **Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
 2. **Romans 5:12** *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.*
- F. Sproul “The idea of being the Substitute in offering an atonement to satisfy the demands of God’s law for others was something Christ understood as His mission from the moment He entered this world and took upon Himself a human nature. He came from heaven as the gift of the Father for the express purpose of working out redemption as our Substitute, doing for us what we could not possibly do for ourselves.”⁵

III. Define Guilt.

- A. “Guilt is the result of having violated a specific rule or law. When we cross a moral, ethical, or legal line, we are guilty. This is true even if we did not know a line was crossed. Guilt is primarily a state or condition, not a feeling. According to the bible, we

⁴ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 568.

⁵ R.C. Sproul, *Christ, Our Substitute*, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/jesus-our-substitute>.

ACBC Theology - Question 13

are all guilty before God (Romans 3:10, 23). The fact that a person may not ‘feel guilty’ does not affect his or her guilty status legally or morally.”⁶

- B. Adams “It is important . . . to distinguish between guilt and *a sense of guilt*. In psychological and psychiatric language and literature, usually the two are not distinguished. Pastors must be aware of this when reading such material. In the past the word *guilt* always meant culpability; but with the advent of psychology the word came to mean a sense (or feeling) of guilt.”⁷
- C. Adams “As *guilt* is the basis for a sense of guilt (or bad feelings triggered by a guilty conscience – that is the actual dynamic involved), Christians should recognize (1) that it is not adequate to treat feelings alone (by medication, shock, transcendental meditation, biofeedback, home-brew, etc.) and (2) that it can be dangerous to do so (since this may lead to searing the conscience is the result of not heeding it). Christian counselors, instead, will treat the cause.”⁸
1. **Luke 17:1-3** *And he said to his disciples, “Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him,*
- D. Grudem “In terms of our legal standing before God, any one sin, even what may seem to be a very small one, makes us legally guilty before God and therefore worthy of eternal punishment.”⁹
1. **Matthew 5:28** *But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*
- E. “The guilt of original sin (guilt stemming representatively from Adam’s act of transgression) can be removed only by judicial, representative forgiveness in Christ (see ‘Forgiveness,’ *infra*). Guilt from the Christian’s actual sin also must be dealt with by the parental forgiveness that God extends to His children in Christ. Of course, guilt (and guilt feeling) comes from both.”¹⁰

IV. Explain the implications of this doctrine for human guilt over sin.

- A. All of mankind has been separated from God, originally from the Fall of Man (Gen 3), but also from our own sins. Our God is a just God (Col 3:23-24; Psalm 89:14), and he will judge us perfectly (Isa 30:18). There is no question, we all will stand guilty before God (Rom 3:20). The pronouncement of guilt has incurred a penalty, which must be paid in full.
1. The doctrine of substitutionary atonement is founded on these facts. God knew that we would be separated from Him, that we would be found guilty in His just courts because of our sin, and that He made a way of salvation for us. God the Father loved us so much, that He sent God the Son to this earth, to live the perfect life and to die on the cross, a sinner’s death, paying the penalty for our

⁶ <https://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-guilt.html>

⁷ Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 144.

⁸ Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christians Counseling*, 144.

⁹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 501.

¹⁰ Jay Adams, *A Theology of Christian Counseling*, 144.

ACBC Theology - Question 13

sin debt (John 3:16-17). This debt must be paid because God is an absolutely and perfectly just judge. If He were to ignore our sin or the debt we have accumulated, He wouldn't be perfect or just. It must be paid in full

V. Summary

- A. R.C. Sproul “He made satisfaction for our debt, our enmity with God, and our guilt. He satisfied the ransom demand for our release from captivity to sin. However, there is another significant word that is often used in descriptions of the atonement: substitution. When we look at the biblical depiction of sin as a crime, we see that Jesus acts as the Substitute, taking our place at the bar of God’s justice. For this reason, we sometimes speak of Jesus’ work on the cross as the substitutionary atonement of Christ, which means that when He offered an atonement, it was not to satisfy God’s justice for His own sins, but for the sins of others. He stepped into the role of the Substitute, representing His people. He didn’t lay down His life for Himself; He laid it down for His sheep. He is our ultimate Substitute.”¹¹

VI. Suggested Reading:

- A. **Heath Lambert, A Theology of Biblical Counseling: The Doctrinal Foundations of Counseling Ministry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016), 136-157.**
- B. **Jay E. Adams, A Theology of Christian Counseling: More Than Redemption, The Jay Adams Library (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 144-145.**
- C. **Jay E. Adams, Competent to Counsel: Introduction to Nouthetic Counseling, The Jay Adams Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1970), 9-14.**
- D. **John M. Frame, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2013), 899-922.**
- E. Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1986), 275-335.
- F. John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2013), 899-922.
- G. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology, Complete ed* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co, 2018), 367-383, 392-399.
- H. Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1989), 215-245, 321-328.
- I. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology, 3rd ed* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 623-673.
- J. John MacArthur, ed., *Biblical Doctrine: A Systematic Summary of Bible Truth* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017), 235-325, 511-565.

¹¹ R.C. Sproul, *Christ, Our Substitute*, <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/jesus-our-substitute>.