

Redemption 304: Long Introduction



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Our main study on Redemption focuses on a biblical look at how Jesus provides atonement. More precisely, the study provides a scriptural explanation for how Jesus accomplishes our redemption without substituting for each of us by taking our individual places in the punishments we deserve for our sin. We thought it would be helpful to amend this study with a slightly more detailed introduction to the various theories of redemption, which are taught in the church today.

This document will contain several segments. The first will contain basic information on the various theories of how atonement works. The second will include quotations from prominent leaders in the Faith Movement regarding the substitutionary view of redemption in which Jesus takes each of our places by suffering the punishment that is due to us as sinners. The third segment will involve a survey of biblical texts which mention Christ's redemptive work with interest in the question of whether scriptural authors describe Jesus' atonement in terms of punishment (penal) substitution or in terms of some other means, such as ransom. And the fourth segment will contain an examination of biblical passages that may be used to support the idea of redemption by punishment substitution. In the final segment, we will summarize our conclusions from this study as well as outline the material that follows in our larger Redemption Study series.

Section One: Atonement Theories

The article below defines three or four main models for how Christ provides redemption.

Atonement - In theology, atonement is a doctrine that describes how human beings can be reconciled to God. In Christian theology the atonement refers to the forgiving or pardoning of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which made possible the reconciliation between God and creation. Within Christianity there are, historically, three or four main theories for how such atonement might work:

- **The ransom theory/Christus Victor** (which are different, but generally considered together as **Patristic** or "classical", to use Gustaf Aulen's

nomenclature, theories, being argued that **these were the traditional understandings of the early Church Fathers**);

- **The moral influence theory**, which Aulen considered to be developed by Peter Abelard (called by him the "idealistic" view),
- **The satisfaction theory** developed by Anselm of Canterbury (called by Aulen the "scholastic" view),
- **The penal substitution theory** (which is a refinement of the Anselmian satisfaction theory **developed by the Protestant Reformers, especially John Calvin, and is often treated together with the satisfaction view**, giving rise to the "four main types" of atonement theories - classical or patristic, scholastic, and idealistic - spoken of by Aulen).[3] – wikipedia.org

As the quote above states, there are three or four main views of how Jesus atones for sin. First we will identify them. Then we will describe what each entails and how it relates to or differs from other views.

The first view is called the Ransom Theory. It is often coupled with the idea of Christ as the victor or conquered. These two concepts of redemption are identified as the “traditional understanding of the early Church Fathers.” Thus, the Ransom and Victor Theories are deemed Patristic or classical theories of redemption because they represent a very old understanding of the subject as expressed by Christian writers in the earliest periods of the church.

The second model is called the Moral Influence Theory. The third is called the Satisfaction Theory. And the fourth is called the Penal Substitution Theory. As the article explains, the Penal (or Punishment) Substitution Theory was put forward by the Protestant Reformers, particularly Calvin and is simply a refinement of the satisfaction theory.

Now that we have identified these views we will explain what each theory has to say about how redemption is accomplished by Christ. Once again, we will start with the Ransom and Victor Theories, which can be found well-defined as early as the second century of Irenaeus.

Atonement - Chronologically, the second explanation, **first clearly enunciated by Irenaeus,[13] is the "ransom" or "Christus Victor" theory.** "Christus victor" and "ransom" are slightly different from each other: **in the ransom metaphor Jesus liberates mankind from slavery to sin and Satan and thus death by giving his own life as a ransom sacrifice.** (Matthew 20:18) Victory over Satan consists of swapping the life of the perfect (Jesus), for the lives of the imperfect (mankind). **The "Christus Victor" theory sees Jesus not used as a ransom but rather defeating Satan in a spiritual battle and thus freeing enslaved mankind by defeating the captor. This theory 'continued for a thousand years to influence Christian theology, until it was finally shifted and discarded by Anselm'.** – wikipedia.org

As explained above, the Ransom Theory and the Victor Theory are closely related. Although these terms are used to emphasize their relative differences from one another, the two models can easily be coupled together to describe Christ's work in ransoming sinful men from their captivity through his sacrificial death by which he victoriously conquered our captor, the devil, and set us free. For this reason we will follow the enumeration used in the article above and collect the Ransom and Victor Theories into a single view which we will call the Ransom Theory. We should also note the earliness of this concept of redemption in contrast to the Satisfaction (and Penal Substitution) Theory, which doesn't begin to emerge until over a thousand years later.

Next is the Moral Influence Theory.

Atonement - The earliest explanation for how the atonement works is nowadays often called the moral influence theory. In this view the core of Christianity is positive moral change, and the purpose of everything Jesus did was to lead humans toward that moral change. He is understood to have accomplished this variously through his teachings, example, founding of the Church, and the inspiring power of his martyrdom and resurrection. This view was universally taught by the Church Fathers in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD, along with what is called by Aulen the classical or patristic view, which can be variously interpreted as Ransom or Recapitulation, or under the general heading of "Christus Victor". The moral influence theory also enjoyed popularity during the Middle Ages and is most often associated in that period with Peter Abelard. Since the Reformation it has been advocated by many theologians Immanuel Kant, Hastings Rashdall and Paul Tillich. It remains the most popular view of atonement among theologically liberal Christians. It also forms the basis for René Girard's "mimetic desire" theory (not to be confused with meme theory). – wikipedia.org

Like the Ransom Theory, the Moral Influence Theory is also very ancient. In fact, as is stated above, the Moral Influence Theory was taught alongside the Ransom (Victor) Theory by the earliest church. The reason that both the Moral Influence Theory and the Ransom (Victor) Theory could be taught side by side is that they are compatible with one another. They merely discuss different, but cooperative or complementary aspects of Christ's redeeming work. The Moral Influence Theory expresses that Christ's atoning work involved his providing the means for positive moral change among sinful men which he accomplished through his teachings and his example, including his sacrificial death and inspiring resurrection. This concept of redemption does not contradict the necessity proposed by the Ransom Theory wherein, in addition to providing the means for moral reform, Christ also needed to ransom us from our captivity to the devil which was warranted by our sin.

The third model of redemption is the Satisfaction Theory.

Atonement - The third metaphor, used by the 11th century theologian Anselm, is called the "satisfaction" theory. In this picture mankind owes a debt not to

Satan, but to sovereign God himself. A sovereign may well be able to forgive an insult or an injury in his private capacity, but because he is a sovereign he cannot if the state has been dishonoured. Anselm argued that the insult given to God is so great that **only a perfect sacrifice could satisfy and Jesus, being both God and man, was this perfect sacrifice. Therefore, the doctrine would be that Jesus gave himself as a “ransom for many”, to God the Father himself.** – wikipedia.org

The Satisfaction Theory sees Christ's redemptive work as satisfying the requirements of God as the sovereign over all creation. As the article explains only Christ's perfect sacrifice could satisfy God's justice. In this way, the Satisfaction Theory contrasts with the Ransom (Victor) Theory. In the Ransom Theory, Christ pays the price to redeem sinful men from their captivity to the devil. The price involves his sinless death as a man whereby he conquered the devil and deprived him of his authority over us and set us free. Contrarily, the Satisfaction Theory involves Christ's sacrifice being paid to God and does not address the role of the devil or the aspect of the need for moral rehabilitation.

As we have seen, the fourth model, the Penal Substitution Model is simply a refinement of the Satisfaction Theory. It emerged at the time of the Protestant Reformers and was promoted by John Calvin. If what these articles are saying is true, it means that although the early church understood Christ's redeeming work in terms of the Ransom, Victor, and Moral Influence Theories, for the first 1,000 years Christians did not understand Christ's redeeming work in terms of Christ taking their place as a substitute when it came to divine punishment. Anselm of Canterbury, who is credited with the related Satisfaction Theory, lived from 1033-1109 AD. And the revision of Satisfaction Theory into Penal Substitution did not take place until several more centuries after Anselm during the time of the Protestant Reformation. This is one weakness of the Penal Substitution Theory. It was not held by the early church.

Atonement - The next explanation, which was a **development by the Reformers of Anselm's satisfaction theory, is the commonly held Protestant "penal substitution theory,"** which, instead of considering sin as an affront to God's honour, sees sin as the breaking of God's moral law. Placing a particular emphasis on Romans 6:23 (the wages of sin is death), **penal substitution sees sinful man as being subject to God's wrath with the essence of Jesus' saving work being his substitution in the sinner's place, bearing the curse in the place of man** (Galatians 3:13). – wikipedia.org

Penal substitution (sometimes, esp. in older writings, called forensic theory) is a **theory of the atonement within Christian theology, developed with the Reformed tradition. It argues that Christ, by his own sacrificial choice, was punished (penalised) in the place of sinners (substitution), thus satisfying the demands of justice so God can justly forgive the sins.** It is thus a specific understanding of substitutionary atonement, where **the substitutionary nature of Jesus' death is understood in the sense of a substitutionary punishment.** – wikipedia.org

Governmental Theory of Atonement – the penal substitution theory held by most Calvinists. It can also be contrasted with the Christus Victor understanding preferred by most Eastern Orthodox Christians and many Lutherans. **The satisfaction view argues that Christ made satisfaction to the Father for the sins of humanity** by His sacrifice on the Cross, **penal substitution theory argues that Jesus received the full and actual punishment due to men and women, while the Christus Victor view emphasises the liberation of humanity from the bondage of sin, death, and the Devil.** – wikipedia.org

Since the time of the Reformation, the Penal Substitution Theory has been very influential. Though this influence is strong in Reformed and Calvinist denominations in particular it has spread to other areas of the church and is commonly articulated by many Christians today regardless of their church background. As its name indicates, the Penal Substitution Theory teaches that Christ substituted in the place of each individual sinner and bore the divine punishments that are required for each of us.

As we can see below, the article continues to emphasize that this concept of Christ substituting for our individual punishments was not taught before the Reformed Period.

Atonement - Confusion of terms

Some confusion can occur when discussing the atonement because the terms used sometimes have differing meanings depending on the contexts in which they are used. For example:

- Sometimes 'substitutionary atonement' is used to refer to 'penal substitution' alone, when the term also has a broader sense including other atonement models that are not penal.
- Penal substitution is also sometimes described as a type of satisfaction atonement, but the term 'satisfaction atonement' functions primarily as a technical term to refer particularly to Anselm's theory.
- **Substitutionary and penal themes are found within the Patristic (and later) literature, but they are not used in a penal substitutionary sense until the Reformed period.**
- 'Substitution', as well as potentially referring to specific theories of the atonement (e.g. penal substitution), is also sometimes used in a less technical way—for example, when used in 'the sense that [Jesus, through his death,] did for us that which we can never do for ourselves'.
- The phrase 'vicarious atonement' is sometimes used as a synonym for 'penal substitution', and is also sometimes used to describe other, non-penal substitutionary, theories of atonement.

Care needs to be taken to understand what is being referred to by the various terms used in different contexts. – wikipedia.org

To maintain clarity between these different views, we feel it is best to employ terms which reflect and emphasize the real differences and features of each view. Likewise, we feel that these four models can be reduced to two real theoretical

systems of redemption. As we have seen the Ransom Theory and Victor Theory are closely related and are typically collected together. Likewise, both were taught alongside the Moral Influence Theory by the early church due to the fact that these three descriptions of Christ's atoning work are highly compatible with one another. Therefore, while we can and will discuss biblical texts which refer to atonement in terms of a ransom payment, a conquest of the devil, a liberation of sinful men from bondage to the devil, and a moral rehabilitation of repentant sinners in obedience to God's will and conformity to Christ, we can also rightly collect all three views into a single system for understanding how redemption works. For simplicity's sake we prefer to refer to this system as the Ransom View of Redemption.

Likewise, because the Penal Substitution Theory can be understood as a refinement or elaboration of the Satisfaction Model we will collect these two views together as the Penal (or Punishment) Substitution Theory. This is also justified because the Penal Substitution Theory is more commonly held and widely known by Christians than the Satisfaction Model from which it developed.

Furthermore, the Penal Substitution Theory is distinct from the Ransom View for several reasons. First, as a Calvinist model of redemption, the Penal Substitution Theory does not tend to focus on the need for Christ to provide a means for sinful men to reform their moral character by learning and obeying his teaching and choosing to follow his example. Rather, to the extent that moral reform is posited in Reformed Theology at all it relies solely on God's direct action on men's hearts in a process wherein they are altogether passive and in a way that unilaterally and irresistibly compels them to change without regard for their voluntary cooperation. Second, since Calvinist Theology holds that all men are born sinful by nature and emphasizes the need to satisfy God's sovereign requirement for just punishment, there is little consideration given to the idea that a sovereign God would have to pay a ransom to anyone or have to accomplish a conquest of anyone. Consequently, Calvinism is incompatible with the Moral Influence and the Ransom/Victory Theories on a fundamental, doctrinal level.

For these reasons we can predominately consider two main options regarding how redemption is accomplished by Christ. The first is the older of the two and is present in the earliest church. It can be called the Ransom View and incorporates related and compatible aspects offered by the Victor and Moral Influence theories. The second view, called the Penal Substitution View, emerges at the time of the Protestant Reformation (as a further development of Anselm's eleventh-century Satisfaction Theory) and is championed in Calvinist circles.

Now that we understand the basic theories and concepts for how redemption works, we will proceed to consider a problem that has arisen in some Christian circles in relation to the Punishment (Penal) Substitution View of redemption.

Segment Two: Implications of Redemption by Punishment Substitution

The pervasiveness of the Punishment Substitution View of Atonement has impacted the way Christians understand how Jesus saves us. For instance, when ministering to someone, it would not be uncommon for a Christian to explain that Jesus died in your place or paid the penalty for your sins. As shorthand, such statements may be completely acceptable. However, they can easily lead to a line of questioning and logic revealing potential difficulties of the Punishment Substitution View of redemption.

Consider what may happen if we were to explain to someone that Jesus saves us because he died in my place or in their place. A circumspect response to that explanation might invite someone to inquire "If Jesus died in our places, why then do we still die?" Such a question focuses on the inherent concept that is central to the Punishment Substitution View: Christ dies in your place as your substitute in the death penalty you were under for your sin so that you are free from that punishment. But, if Christ has substituted for us in death, why then do we still die? Why do we still suffer the punishment of death if Christ took our place by dying as our substitute? The fact that Christians all still die would imply that no substitution has been made for us in regard to the death penalty.

Difficulties with the Punishment Substitution View also involve a second penalty Christians identify with sin: spiritual separation from fellowship with God. This concept, often thought of as spiritual death, also poses challenges for the Punishment Substitution View. Consider that atonement involves reconciling us to right fellowship with God. As a penalty for our sin we are separated from God. Adam and Eve not only died as a result of sin, they were immediately cast out of God's presence. If Christ's atoning work is accomplished through Christ substituting for us by instead taking the punishment himself so that we are freed from that punishment, then it follows that Christ would have to be separated from fellowship with God. For those of us who affirm that the bible teaches that Christ is God and that God is a Trinity of three, co-eternal, divine Persons, such a concept is impossible. How can God be separated from God? How can one Person be separated from the Trinity without destroying the Trinitarian concept of one God in three Persons?

Attempts to address the penalty of separation from God within the Punishment Substitution View of redemption quite inexorably lead to heretical conclusions about Christ. The following quotes exhibit this alarming reality. And whether they realize it or not, in order to facilitate Christ's substituting for us regarding the punishment of our separation from God, such Christians and church groups ultimately undermine or discard Christ's divinity.

Frederick K.C. Price: "Do you think that the punishment for our sin was to die on a cross? If that were the case, the two thieves could have paid your price. No, **the punishment was to go into hell itself and to serve time in hell separated from God.**" - Page 383, *Ever Increasing Faith Messenger* [June 1980], 7.

Frederick K.C. Price: "Somewhere between the time He [Jesus] was nailed to the cross and when He was in the Garden of Gethsemane-somewhere in there-He died spiritually. Personally, I believe it was while He was in the garden." - Page 157, 395, "Identification #3" (Inglewood, CA: Ever Increasing Faith Ministries, 1980), tape #FP545, side 1.

Kenneth Copeland "The righteousness of God was made to be sin. He accepted the sin nature of Satan in His own spirit. And at the moment that He did so, He cried, 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?' You don't know what happened at the cross. Why do you think that Moses, upon instruction of God, raised the serpent upon that pole instead of a lamb? That used to bug me. I said, 'Why in the world would you want to put a snake up there-the sign of Satan? Why didn't you put a lamb on that pole?' And the Lord said, 'Because it was a sign of Satan that was hanging on the cross.' **He said, 'I accepted, in My own spirit, spiritual death;** and the light was turned off.'" - Page 158, 395, "What Happened from the Cross to the Throne" (Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1990), audiotape #02-0017, side 2.

Charles Capps: "The sinless son of God became as a serpent that He might swallow up all evil...If you will behold what happened when the sin offering was made and the fact that Jesus became a serpent upon a pole, it will change your life...**Jesus died spiritually, not for any of His own sin.** He became the serpent on the pole, the snake on the ground, in the Old Testament type." - Page 383, *Authority in Three Worlds*, 177, 166-67.

Kenneth Hagin: "Jesus died as our Substitute. He who knew no sin was made to be sin. He took upon Himself our sin nature. And **He died-He was separated and cut off from God.** He went down into the prison house of **suffering in our place.** He was there three day and nights." - Page 396, "Made Alive," *The Word of Faith* 15, 4 (April 1982):3.

Kenneth Hagin: "He [Jesus] tasted spiritual death for every man. And His spirit and inner man went to hell in my place. Can't you see that? **Physical death wouldn't remove your sins. He's tasted death for every man. He's talking about tasting spiritual death.**" - Page 164, 396 "How Jesus Obtained His Name" (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, n.d.), tape #44H01, side 1.

Kenneth Hagin: "[s]piritual death means something more than separation from God. *Spiritual death also means having Satan's nature...***Jesus tasted death-spiritual death-for every man.**" - Page 156, 395, Kenneth E. Hagin, *The Name of Jesus* (Tulsa, OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, 1981), 31, emphasis in original.

It is interesting to note that several of the quotes above also refer to the sinful nature. In Reformed and Calvinist Theologies, one of the consequences of Adam's sin was that all of his descendents were born with a sinful nature, not just born with the potential to sin but born with real, inherited guilt. If this sinful nature must be removed in order to restore us to fellowship with God and the

means of that removal is Christ taking the punishment of sin upon himself, then as these leaders conclude, Christ would have had to have taken on the sinful nature so that we could be freed from our sinful nature. The suggestion that Christ became sinful so that we would be considered innocent is also problematic scripturally. How could God be sinful?

Additionally, we might consider that the punishments prescribed for our sins were not temporary. The situation is not comparable to a convicted criminal who is sentenced to a limited number of years in prison and then released when the prison sentence is fulfilled. Physical death was a permanent effect. People did not come back to life after remaining dead for some period of time during which they somehow paid the debts for their sins. They stayed dead for thousands of years until Christ's death and resurrection. If Christ had not come, they would have stayed dead forever. Only once Christ died and was resurrected were other men also resurrected from death. The same is true for the loss of fellowship with God. The situation is not comparable with a convicted criminal who is separated from society through incarceration for a few years and then restored to society. In short, without Christ's death and resurrection, the imposed penalties for our sins were permanent.

Restoration to life and fellowship with God required atonement to be made. But if the mode of atonement is someone else enduring your punishments so that you are freed from undergoing those penalties, then the substitution must continue for as long as the punishment was to continue. If Christ redeems you by taking your punishment so you don't have to, this would imply that Christ must continue to endure that punishment for as long as the punishment was to be applied to you. And yet, Christ was released from death through resurrection and is seated at God's right hand in fellowship. Who then is serving your punishments of permanent death and separation from God? Furthermore, if Christians still die physically even though Christ died for them how then can we be confident that the other consequence, separation from God, has been removed? In other words, if substitution doesn't end our death in the present age, why should we think that substitution is a sufficient means to restore fellowship with God? How can penalties which were going to be eternal be substituted for by only a few days of time served?

Difficulties compound for those who subscribe to the Punishment Substitution View who do not also hold to a Reformed/Calvinist understanding of the fall. Within Calvinism, all men are considered guilty in Adam. As such a Calvinist conception of punishment substitution can allow for a one-to-one exchange wherein Christ substitutes for Adam and by doing so allows all those who were condemned in Adam to therefore be justified in Christ. However, if this federal Calvinist model is not adopted then substitution requires Christ to take the place of not just one condemned person. Rather, he must bear the punishments of each and every sinner. It is easy to conceive of one person bearing another's punishment so that the guilty party does not themselves have to undergo the consequence. It is even conceivable that one person could bear the punishments of multiple persons so long as the punishment wasn't death or permanent

incarceration. But once the punishment is permanent then it becomes difficult for a single individual to pay the penalties accrued by multiple guilty persons. A man may die in the place of his friend so his friend can escape the death sentence pronounced on him, but how can one man pay the death sentences required for two different people? Since he cannot die more than once, one man is unable to pay the death penalty for more than one person. He cannot therefore serve as a substitute for the salvation of more than one condemned person. One man could likewise not substitute for lifetime incarceration for more than one person.

We can see the logistical difficulties inherent to the Punishment Substitution View of redemption. It seems the mechanism by which this theory of atonement conceives of Christ's work is faulty. It fails to work logically. And it fails theologically because it undermines the divinity of Jesus Christ. But nonetheless, if the scripture clearly declares that Christ substituted for us by taking the punishments of our sins then we are perhaps bound to accept the Punishment Substitution View of redemption regardless of whether it seems sound and without regard for the fact that the early church didn't hold to this view. With this idea in mind we now turn to an examination of the biblical descriptions of Christ's atoning work to see what indications there are for the Punishment Substitution and Ransom Views of redemption.

Section Three: Biblical Descriptions of Redemption

Regardless of the difficulties associated with the Punishment Substitution View, we can determine which model of redemption to accept by identifying how the bible describes Jesus' atoning work. One means to measure how the scripture explains redemption is to survey the language used by biblical authors when they discuss this topic. If the Punishment Substitution View is scriptural we would expect to find biblical authors regularly describing Christ's redemptive work in relation to punishment and substitution. On the other hand, if the Ransom (Victor and Moral Influence) View is taught in the bible, we would expect to find Christ's atoning work presented as paying a price to ransom or redeem, conquest of the enemy to whom we were in bondage, and providing teaching and an example to which we must faithfully conform ourselves.

Words for penalty and punishment are certainly used in the New Testament to speak of civil consequences men suffer for crimes (Luke 23:22, Rom. 13:4-5, 2 Peter 2:14) and consequences men are sentenced to for sin (Matt. 25:46, Luke 12:48, Rom. 1:27, 2 Cor. 2:6, 2 Peter 2:9, 1 John 4:18, Jude 1:7, Rev. 17:1). However, a survey of the New Testament reveals that words for penalty and punishment are never used to refer to Christ's redemptive work. The New Testament nowhere teaches that Christ was punished or endured punishment for sin. (There are few passages which may deserve closer inspection on this point which we will address in more detail below.) Likewise, there is no place in the New Testament which states that God poured out his wrath on Christ.

In contrast to the lack of terms related to punishment and substitution, the New Testament does regularly speak of Christ's atoning work in terms associated with ransom. First, we have John 19:30 which uses the Greek verb "teleo" wherein Jesus, just before he dies, says "It is finished ("teleo" Strong's number 5055). This Greek word conveys the idea of "bringing to a close, finishing, ending" and can also speak of "paying" as in "paying a tribute."

5055 teleo

from 5056; TDNT-8:57,1161; v

AV-finish 8, fulfil 7, accomplish 4, pay 2, perform 1, expire 1, misc 3; 26

1) **to bring to a close, to finish, to end**

1a) **passed, finished**

2) **to perform, execute, complete, fulfil**, (so that the thing done corresponds to what has been said, the order, **command** etc.)

2a) with special reference to the subject matter, **to carry out the contents of a command**

2b) with reference also to the form, **to do just as commanded**, and generally involving the notion of time, to perform the last act which completes a process, to accomplish, fulfil

3) **to pay**

3a) **of tribute**

While the concept of payment may be relatable to paying a penalty and a penalty can be equated with a punishment, here payment is related to a tribute or monetary cost. So, while the Punishment Substitution View may want to interpret this verse as indicating that Jesus was paying a penalty it is also quite possible linguistically and contextually that John 19:30 is saying that Jesus had fulfilled God's commands, that he had finished his atoning work, or that he had paid the price required to redeem us. In any case, since a ransom inherently has to do with a payment John 19:30 doesn't give any clear or necessary support to the Punishment Substitution View over the Ransom View.

Similarly, 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 7:23 state that we are "bought with a price." Here we see the clear idea of purchasing something from someone. This fits perfectly with the idea of redemption through ransom. Moreover, The New Testament actually refers to Christ's atoning work as a ransom on three occasions (Matthew 20:28, Mark 10:45, and 1 Timothy 2:6).

Matthew 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

1 Timothy 2:6 Who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time.

The first two of these verses use the Greek noun “lutron” (3038) which refers to “the price for redeeming or ransoming something” or “the price paid for captives.”

3083 **lutron**

from 3089; TDNT-4:328 & 4:340,543; n n

AV-ransom 2; 2

1) **the price for redeeming, ransom**

1a) **paid for slaves, captives**

1b) for the ransom of life

2) to liberate many from misery and the penalty of their sins

1 Timothy 2:6 uses the related compound noun “antilutron” (487) which likewise means “what is given in an exchange for another as the price of his redemption, ransom.”

We also have nine occasions in which the New Testament refers to Christ’s atoning work as redemption. We must keep in mind that redemption itself refers to the idea of ransoming or paying to liberate someone from bondage rather than to taking their place in bondage or punishment. For example, we have Hebrews 9:15 which refers to Christ providing redemption for our transgressions.

Hebrews 9:15 And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that **by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament**, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

The word “redemption” is translated from the Greek noun “apolutrosis” (which is another compound word related to “lutron” 3083) which means “a releasing effected by payment of ransom” and “liberation procured by the payment of a ransom.”

629 **apolutrosis**

from a compound of 575 and 3083; TDNT-4:351; n f

AV-redemption 9, deliverance 1; 10

1) **a releasing effected by payment of ransom**

1a) redemption, deliverance

1b) **liberation procured by the payment of a ransom**

This Greek word “apolutrosis” is used 8 other times in the New Testament to refer to the redemption that Christ has provided for us (Luke 21:28, Romans 3:24, 8:23, 1 Cor. 1:30, Eph. 1:7, 14, 4:30, and Col. 1:14.) Furthermore, the related word “lutrosis” (3085) is used in Luke 1:68, 2:38, and Hebrews 9:12 to refer to Christ “ransoming or redeeming” us. It comes from the root word “lutroo” (3084) and is used to speak of Christ’s work in Luke 24:21, Titus 2:14, and 1 Peter 1:18.

3084 **lutroo**

from 3083; TDNT-4:349,543; v

AV-redeem 3; 3

1) **to release on receipt of ransom**

2) **to redeem, liberate by payment of ransom**

2a) **to liberate**

2b) **to cause to be released to one's self by payment of a ransom**

2c) to redeem

2d) to deliver: from evils of every kind, internal and external

In addition, we have the Greek verb “exagorazo” (1805) which is translated as “redeem” in reference to Christ’s work in both Gal. 3:13 and 4:5. This Greek verb comes from the related word “agorazo” (59) and means “to redeem, by payment of a price to recover from the power of another, to ransom, buy off.” The verb “agorazo” (59) is used in Revelation 5:9, 14:3-4 to refer to those Christ has redeemed. This is the same word used in 1 Cor. 6:20 and 7:23 which speak of Christ purchasing us.

All of these passages repeatedly convey and reinforce the essential conception of redemption which is mentioned in Leviticus 25. It is the idea of a price being paid to liberate someone from bondage incurred through debt. In this respect we should also include passages such as Matthew 18:25-34 and Luke 7:42 in which Jesus discusses our forgiveness using the analogy of being sold into debt and the forgiveness of debt. (Further discussion of biblical teaching on sin, debt, and forgiveness can be found in our study entitled, “Righteousness on Credit.”)

Our survey has shown that the New Testament discussion of Christ’s atoning work regularly employs language related to paying a price (ransom) in order to free someone from bondage to another. In contrast, there are no instances in which Christ is said to atone for us by suffering our punishments for us. This leads us to consider a few particular biblical passages which may be cited to provide at least some basis for the Punishment Substitution View of redemption. These passages include 1 Peter 2:20-21, Isaiah 53, Galatians 3:13, and 2 Corinthians 5:21. We will now take some time to consider these passages in light of our two redemption models.

Section Four: Passages Used to Support the Punishment Substitution View

In the above sections we have seen that the biblical description of Christ’s atoning work employs ransom terminology and that there are no places where the New Testament speaks of Christ being punished for our sins or substituting for each of us by taking our punishments. These are the results of a biblical survey of terms related to our two major theories of redemption. However, a consideration of this topic would not be complete without a look at a few passages that may be used in attempts to provide biblical support for the Punishment Substitution View. We will start with 1 Peter 2:20-21.

1 Peter 2:20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this

is acceptable with God. 21 For even hereunto were ye called: because **Christ also suffered for us**, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

The critical component of 1 Peter 2 comes in verse 21 where Peter states that “Christ suffered for you.” As we read these words it can be easy to conclude that Peter taught that Christ was punished in our place. However, we must be careful to note that Peter does not say “Christ was punished in our place.” Rather, he says “Christ suffered for us.” The words “punished” and “in our place” are not used by Peter to explain Christ’s atoning work. The Greek word translated as “suffered” is “pascho” (3958). The meaning of this word is “to suffer” or “to undergo a bad experience.” This is supported by its translation simply as “suffer” 39 of its 40 uses in the New Testament.

3958 **pascho**

apparently a root word; TDNT-5:904,798; v

AV-suffer 39, be vexed 1, passion + 3588 1, feel 1; 42

1) **to be affected or have been affected, to feel, have a sensible experience, to undergo**

1a) in a good sense, to be well off, in good case

1b) **in a bad sense, to suffer sadly, be in a bad plight**

1b1) of a sick person

Likewise, the Greek phrase translated as “for us” is “huper” (5228) “hemon” (2257). The first word “huper” is a primary preposition which can mean “in behalf of, for the sake of”

5228 **huper**

a primary preposition; TDNT-8:507,1228; prep

1) in behalf of, for the sake of

2) over, beyond, more than

3) more, beyond, over

The second word “hemon” is the plural first person pronoun meaning “our,” “we,” or “us.” While it is true that this phrase can be translated as “on behalf of us” it must be noted that such a phrasing is not equivalent to “instead of us.” Someone can truly act on someone else’s behalf without trading places with them. For example, paying a ransom to a kidnapper is an act on behalf and for the sake of those who have been kidnapped, but it is not equivalent to taking their place as those held hostage. Therefore, while the vocabulary employed in 1 Peter 2:21 would not contradict the Punishment Substitution View, it also does not necessarily provide support for it. This verse is at least equally compatible with the Ransom View. And given the hermeneutic principle that less clear or specific verses should be interpreted in light of passages which speak more directly to a topic, it is more sound to understand 1 Peter 2:21 in light of the abundant New Testament descriptions of Christ’s atoning work as ransom rather than in contrast to those descriptions and in favor of an interpretation that is nowhere else expressed.

Before we leave 1 Peter 2, we should also look at what follows the critical phrase in verse 21.

1 Peter 2:21 For even hereunto were ye called: because **Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:** 22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: 23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: 24 **Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes (3468) ye were healed.** 25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Verse 21 concludes that we are to follow the example Christ set when he “suffered for us.” This is perhaps a strange instruction for Peter to issue if he means that Christ was punished in the place of sinners. It would mean that Peter is here telling Christians to stand in the place of wrongdoers and take the punishments such wrongdoers deserved. By contrast, if Peter means that Christ underwent a difficult and unpleasant trial for our benefit when he didn’t have to, then Peter’s instructions make more sense. Peter would simply be telling Christians to be willing to endure difficulty for righteousness’ sake to benefit others just as Christ did. This kind of teaching has much precedent in the New Testament and so it would not be strange to find Peter saying so here.

Verse 24 remains to be discussed. In it we see Peter declare that Christ “bore our sins in his own body on the tree so that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness.” Again, while this statement may work with a Punishment Substitution View, it doesn’t necessitate that view. Nor does this verse constitute something incompatible with the Ransom View. Potential support for the Punishment Substitution View hinges on verse 24 in which Peter’s cites of Isaiah 53:5, “by his stripes we are healed.”

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and **with his stripes (02250) we are healed.**

In 1 Peter 2:24 and in Isaiah 53:5 “stripes” are simply a reference to a physical wound. Peter uses the Greek word “molops” (3468) which means “a bruise” or “wound.” Isaiah uses the Hebrew word “chabbuwrah” (02250) which similarly means simply a “bruise, stripe, wound, blow.” Peter is not even using the same word used in Luke 12:47-48 or Acts 16:23, 33 to describe when someone is wounded or bruised as a result of punishment.

Luke 12:47 And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 **But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.** For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Acts 16:20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, **These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,** 21 **And teach customs, which are not lawful** for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. 23 **And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison,** charging the jailor to keep them safely.

While the word used in these passages from Luke and Acts (“plege” 4127) likewise means “bruise” or “wound,” the passages take the time to contextually relate the wounding to a punishment mandated and carried out by another party. Peter does not contain such context. Neither does Isaiah 53.

The point here, of course, is not whether Christ was sentenced to a punishment according to the Jewish and Roman penal code. Both views readily agree to this fact. But the question is how Christ’s death sentence delivers us. Was his punishment intended to satisfy our sentence? Or does his punishment pay a price to remove the system that condemns us? The fact that both views require Christ to be sentenced to death according to Jewish and Roman law simply does not tell us how his suffering death delivers us.

Even in human terms, we might imagine a just man who makes a martyr of himself, allowing himself to be unjustly punished by governing authorities, in order to expose and ultimately overturn that system. His martyrdom would in some sense express kinship and sympathy with those who were justly condemned by that system. And his willingness to suffer while innocent would send a message to guilty parties that they should be all the more willing to endure until mercy is obtained for them. Political movements of non-violent resistance in recent history echo some (but not all) of these very themes. So, the scenario is a perfectly logical and realistic one. But nothing in this scenario in any way invokes the idea that the just martyr is substituting and suffering the punishment of other condemned persons. Instead, his martyrdom is simply the necessary sacrificial blow to expose and unravel the entire system and obtain mercy. Likewise, Christ can certainly undergo an unjust punishment for a crime he did not commit as the means to provide atonement without it being the case that he was suffering the punishment of others in their place.

An illustration of this concept can be seen in the 1980 film entitled *Brubaker*, starring Robert Redford as the titular character. In the film, Brubaker is the newly-appointed warden of a prison that is suspected of severe and illegal mistreatment of its inmates. To combat the problem, Brubaker enters the prison not as the warden, but disguised as an inmate. His authority and true identity remain undisclosed to the prison authorities and the population. Once inside, he not only witnesses but is subjected to the very abuses he has come to investigate. The ruse provided several groundbreaking advantages. It allowed Brubaker to directly experience and expose the mistreatment firsthand. And it gained him respect and cooperation among some of the inmates. But it also required him to be willing to suffer to some extent as one of the prisoners. It is critical to note that

while Brubaker intends to remedy the circumstances of the prisoners, his methodology does not involve serving their sentences in their stead and letting them go. Rather, the film illustrates how an innocent man can be willing to suffer punishment for the cause of guilty persons in order to overturn and end their suffering.

The same is true to the Ransom View's conception of Christ's atoning work. Though Jesus is innocent and is punished unjustly in order to bring an end to the bondage and punishment we entered into because of our sins, his willingness to suffer punishment unjustly simply does not logically lead to the conclusion that he is suffering our punishments for us. His suffering only needs to be the mechanism for bringing an end to the authority that is over us and for replacing it with a better system that allows for the rehabilitation and forgiveness of the guilty and their re-admittance into the society and fellowship of God.

Ultimately, the phrase "by his stripes we are healed" does not demand that his stripes should have been our stripes. It simply demonstrates something agreed to by both views, namely, that we benefit from Jesus' suffering. But the passage does not describe how this suffering accomplishes or triggers that benefit.

Next, we turn to another aspect of 1 Peter 2:24, which may deserve some attention. Verse 24 states that Christ himself "bore our sins in his own body on the tree that we being dead to sins should live unto righteousness." A Punishment Substitution View of redemption may see in this statement support for its concept of atonement. Here Peter would be interpreted to mean that Jesus was treated by God as guilty, taking our sins on himself and dying on the cross bearing our punishment, so that we who were sinful and deserving of death could live and be considered righteous. Such a statement would fit well with the Punishment Substitution View. However, before we accept this interpretation we should conduct some additional examination of verse 24.

First, the phrase "dead to sins" isn't a reference to guilt. The phrase, "dead to sin" can also be found in Romans 6:2 and 6:11, where it refers to repentance. Romans 6:2 says, "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Romans 6:11 says, "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." Consequently, when 1 Peter 2:24 says "that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness," it isn't a reference to our guilt, it's a reference to our repentance. And the inherently connected state of "living unto righteousness" is depicted in this verse as a result of our repentance in response to Christ's death, rather than as an exchange resulting from Christ being counted as guilty. (Our point here isn't to exclude the role of Christ in atoning for our guilt as if our repentance alone could accomplish our redemption. To the contrary, we believe the whole of scripture teaches that both Christ's atoning death and our repentance play a necessary role.) Ultimately, the phrase "dead to sin" in this context undermines the central substitutionary equation. If the phrase does not refer to our guilt, it can't necessarily refer to Christ being counted guilty so the guilty can be counted as innocent.

Second, we'll notice that this phrase is a description of the purpose of Christ's work on the cross. This verse declares that Christ "bore our sins" on the cross so that we might repent and live righteously. But it does not spell out the actual means by which his suffering accomplished this purpose.

Third, what does "bare our sins" mean? The Punishment Substitution view would suggest perhaps that "bare our sins" means "bore our guilt" in the sense of Christ being deemed guilty and punished in our stead. However, the Greek word for "bare" here is "anaphero" (Strong's No. 399), which generally means "to carry or lead up" but more specifically conveys the idea "to put upon the altar, to bring to the altar, to offer." Of the 10 times "anaphero" occurs in the New Testament, it is translated as "offer" or "offer up" 5 times, including passages like Hebrews 13:15 which says "let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God" and James 2:21 which says that Abraham "offered Isaac his son upon the altar." And perhaps more relevantly, 1 Peter 2:5 uses "anaphero" when describing Christians as "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices." Of the remaining 5 occurrences of "anaphero," 2 are translated as "bear," the meaning of which we're investigating currently. And the other 3 times when it is translated as "bring up," "lead up," or "carry up" refer to actually physical travel in Matthew 17:1, Mark 9:2, and Luke 24:51 and are not descriptions of atonement or redemption. If we interpret "anaphero" in 1 Peter 2:24 similar to 1 Peter 2:5, the passage would say that Jesus "offered up our sins" on the cross, which is a far different concept than Jesus being counted as guilty of our sins on the cross. (We'll return to "anaphero" a short while later below.)

Fourth, if we look deeper, here we even see some New Testament examples of the Moral Influence theory. Consider Hebrews 12:2-4, for instance, which states, "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." Notice that the idea presented here is one in which Christ is the example that we look to and that his example is specifically displayed by his death on the cross. Moreover, the author closes saying, "ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." In short, Christ's death is an example that we follow for how to resist sin. The basic concept is that when Christ yields to suffering and death, he gives the ultimately display of turning one's back on the body's inclinations for comfort and enjoyment. And in this sense, he dies to sin. So, we should count ourselves as dead to sin also and sacrifice our bodies by the choices we make every day. We see this concept presented also in Romans 12:1, which says, "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." In short, Christ's death entails a sacrifice of the desires of the body, including by definition, sinful desires.

Fifth, the phrase "should live unto righteousness" conveys not only the idea of our present lives but, in the New Testament, often conveys the idea of our resurrection. In fact, Romans 8 reflects both this concept of resurrection as well as our previous point concerning Christ's death on the cross as an example for

putting to death our sinful desires. Romans 8:10-11 states, “And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” So, in this sense, 1 Peter 2:24 is also relaying how Jesus’ death on the cross served the purpose of bringing about our physical resurrection if we die to sin, or as Paul says in Romans 6:11, “reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.”

Ultimately, we can see that the phrase “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness” does not convey that Jesus bore our guilt and by extension our punishment so that we could be counted as righteous and avoid punishment. Instead, this phrase describes how Christ’s death “offers” or “sacrifices” the desires of the body and, in accordance with general New Testament themes, it does so in that way teaches us to repent by doing the same so that we might be resurrected. In short, we can see then that the text of 1 Peter 2:24 doesn’t actually provide any indication that Peter has a trading of places or substitution of positions in mind between Christ and the sinner. The concepts expressed in 1 Peter 2 merely reflect the views of the Ransom, Victor, and Moral Influence models of redemption.

However, there is still more that we can learn about 1 Peter 2:24 by a closer look at the word “anaphero.” We can gain insight into Peter’s intended meaning by seeing if and how other biblical author used these terms. First, we have already seen that 1 Peter 2:24 cites Isaiah 53 in reference to the statement that “by Christ’s stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5). So it is relevant that in Isaiah 53:11-12, we find the following statements being made of Christ’s atoning work.

Isaiah 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for **he shall bear (05445) their iniquities (05771)**. **12** Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; **and he bare (05375) the sin (02399) of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**

A comparison of earlier verses in this passage, particularly verses 5-6, readily demonstrate that Peter has Isaiah 53 in mind when writing 1 Peter 2. But parallels are also evident with regard to the phrases “he shall bear their iniquities” in verse 11 and “he bare the sin of many” in verses 12. These sound remarkably similar to Peter’s phrasing “who his own self bare our sins” in 1 Peter 2:24.

Looking simply at the Hebrew vocabulary in verses 11-12 doesn’t really provide any new definitional information since the Hebrew terms are largely equivalent to the Greek counterparts found in 1 Peter 2:24. Verse 11 uses the Hebrew word “cabal” (05445) which means “to bear” or “to bear a load” and which is translated as “carry” in four of its nine occurrences in the Old Testament. Similarly, verse 12 uses the Hebrew word “nasa” (05375) which means “to lift, bear up, carry, take.” Both terms are essentially synonyms to the Greek word “anaphero.” In addition,

verse 11 uses the Hebrew word “avon” (05771), which can convey “guilt” but can also simply convey the sinful act itself or the punishment for the sin. Likewise, verse 12 uses the Hebrew word “chet” (02399) which means “sin.” Simply put, according to Isaiah, Christ will make many righteous (“justify many,” verse 11) by “bearing their sins.” But the language is no more definitive than what we already find in Peter’s epistle.

The Septuagint, the pre-Christian translation of the Old Testament into Greek, further reveals the extent to which Peter was drawing upon Isaiah. In the Septuagint, verses 11 and 12 are translated with the Greek words “anaphero” (399) and “hamartia” (266), the same terms we find employed in 1 Peter 2:24 to refer to Christ bearing our sins. Likewise, the Septuagint of Isaiah 53:11 uses the Greek words “dikaioo” (1344) and “diakaios” (1342) to refer to “justifying” or “making righteous,” which parallels 1 Peter 2:24’s use of the related Greek word “dikaiosune” (1343).

If we do a search for these two Greek words “anaphero” (399, “lift up”) and “hamartia” (266, “sin”) in the New Testament, we will find two relevant results that will give us insight into the meaning of 1 Peter 2:24 and Isaiah 53:11-12. Both results come from the book of Hebrews. We will start with Hebrews 9:28 because the phrasing is so similar to Peter with regard to the use of these particular Greek words.

Hebrews 9:28 So **Christ was once** offered to bear (399) the sins (266) of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin (266) unto salvation.

Like 1 Peter 2:24, Hebrews is stating that Christ bore the sins of others. According to Hebrews 9:28, Christ “bore the sins of many” by making a single, one-time offering. The context of Hebrews 9 indicates that Christ’s offering, by which he bore our sins, is to be understood in accordance with the service of the high priest (verse 25). This will be important as we continue.

Hebrews 9:22 And almost **all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.** 23 It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 **For Christ** is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, **as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;** 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: **but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.** 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 **So Christ was once offered to bear (399) the sins (266) of many;** and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin (266) unto salvation.

With all of this in mind we now turn to Hebrews 7:27, which not only uses the same Greek terms we find in 1 Peter 2:24, but is also discusses the same points as Hebrews 9:28.

Hebrews 7:26 For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; 27 Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up (399) sacrifice, first for his own sins (266), and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up (399) himself.

Like Hebrews 9, Hebrews 7:26-27 states that Christ offered up a sacrifice as a high priest. This sacrificial offering was “for sins.” And unlike the high priests of the Old Testament, Christ only needed to make his offering once. Furthermore, like 1 Peter 2:24, Hebrews 7:27 states that Christ performed this priestly service by offering up himself, or as Peter says “in his own body” rather than the bodies and blood of animals as the high priests of the Old Testament did.

From both Hebrews 9:22-28 and Hebrews 7:26-27 we can see that Jesus “bearing our sins” was a part of his high priestly service to make an offering for sins. To understand this priestly service further we can turn to the Old Testament. In Leviticus 10:17, Moses states that God had given the sons of Aaron to “bear the iniquity of the congregation and to make atonement for them before the Lord.” We can immediately see that this statement is made in reference to the atoning work that Aaron and his sons were to conduct as the high priests for the sins of the people.

Leviticus 10:16 And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with **Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron** which were left alive, **saying**, 17 Wherefore have ye not eaten the sin offering in the holy place, seeing it is most holy, and **God hath given it you to bear the iniquity of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD?** 18 Behold, the blood of it was not brought in within the holy place: ye should indeed have eaten it in the holy place, as I commanded. 19 **And Aaron said unto Moses, Behold, this day have they offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD;** and such things have befallen me: and if I had eaten the sin offering to day, should it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?

Just as in Isaiah 53:11-12, the Hebrew words that are used in Leviticus 10:17 are “nasa” (05375, “to lift, bear up, carry, take”) and “avon” (05771, “sin, iniquity”). In the Septuagint “hamartia” (266) is again used to translate “sin” or “iniquity.” From this examination we can see that all of these passages are clearly referring to the same thing: the service of the high priest to take up the sins of the people by making an offering to atone for them so that they might be justified (considered righteous) before the Lord.

Now that we have studied these related passages more closely, we can see that Christ’s “bearing our sins” does not refer to trading places with sinners in

punishment. Rather, the high priests bore the sins of the people by making an offering for them before God so that God would count them as righteous. They did not make atonement for the people by trading places with them. It was not as if God considered these high priests to be sinful so that the people would be considered righteous. Nor was it that God made the priests to suffer the punishment deserved by the people. Accordingly, since Hebrews 7:27 and 9:28 so plainly connect 1 Peter 2:24 to Jesus' atoning work as our high priest and since all three passages correspond so well to Leviticus 10 in both subject matter and language, we have good reason to conclude that 1 Peter 2:24 is not saying that Christ traded places with us so that he would be considered sinful and conversely we could be considered innocent. Again, it is by making an offering that a high priest bore the sins of the people, not by suffering the punishment deserved by the people. The "bearing of the sins" therefore does not refer to trading places with the people. It refers to the making of an offering to atone since the people, as sinners, could not make an offering for themselves. They needed someone to "bear" this labor of making the atoning sacrifice.

In this light, we can see that 1 Peter 2:24 only indicates that Christ, as high priest simply bore our sins by making an offering which provided atonement for us and that this sacrificial act also functioned to bring about repentance among sinners as denoted by the phrase "dead to sin." All of these ideas are quite compatible with the Ransom (Victor, and Moral Influence) View of atonement. A Punishment Substitution View can interpret 1 Peter 2:20-24 to work with its conception of atonement, but it is not accurate to say that 1 Peter 2 declares the Punishment Substitution View (or contradicts the Ransom View). This is especially the case given the lack of support for the Punishment Substitution View in the rest of the New Testament and the regular and overt support we find in the New Testament which does declare a Ransom View of atonement.

This brings us back to Isaiah 53, which is the second text that may be used by the Punishment Substitution View to support its model of how redemption works. The critical point comes in several phrases found in verse 5.

Isaiah 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

We discussed the final phrase "by his stripes we are healed" earlier when as we examined 1 Peter 2:24. So, we do not need to recover its meaning again now. Instead, we will address the other three phrases from Isaiah 53:5. Isaiah states that Christ was "wounded for our transgressions," "bruised for our iniquities," and that "the chastisement of our peace was upon him." Let us consider each of these phrases and its implications for our models of redemption.

The first phrase "he was wounded for our transgressions" works easily with either the Punishment Substitution View or the Ransom View. If this phrase is taken to mean that Christ was wounded from suffering the punishments that we accrued for our sins, then it would work well with a Punishment Substitution View of

redemption. The same is true for the phrase “bruised for our iniquities.” If the bruising is due to a punishment for sin, then this could be understood to mean that Christ was bruised from taking the punishment for our sin. However, neither phrase mentions punishment and so both phrases only require the conclusion that Christ would be wounded and bruised in order to provide the atonement that was necessary because of our sins. The Ransom View recognizes that Christ was wounded and bruised as a part of his atoning work and that Christ’s atoning work was necessary because of our sin. So, a reasonable interpretation of these two phrases from Isaiah 53:5 would simply be that it was necessary for Christ to physically suffer in order to provide atonement for the sins of others. Such a concept is not without biblical support. Even as early as Genesis 3:14-15 we learn that the redeemer would be bruised in order to conquer the serpent. Ultimately, Isaiah 53:5’s simple declaration that Christ would undergo physical abuse for the purpose of providing atonement for sin is entirely compatible with the Ransom View of redemption.

The conclusion regarding these first two phrases from Isaiah 53:5 is that while they can understandably be interpreted to fit with the Punishment Substitution View they do not necessitate it. Rather, they merely require that in order to atone for us Christ would suffer. Furthermore, since redemption is the main subject of this study, the language of the kinsman redeemer of Leviticus 25 and Christ’s own parables in which the forgiveness of sin is comparable to servitude and debt cannot be left out of examination. With these passages in mind we can say that in order to redeem us, Christ pays a debt that we owe. In such cases, the kinsman redeemer doesn’t trade places with the indebted servant so that the redeemer is enslaved while the servant is freed. Rather, the redeemer pays their debt. The debt is a penalty or punishment incurred, just like a significant fine. There is no substitution of positions. In this light, Isaiah 53:5 would be saying the redeemer made payment for our debts. Again, while a Punishment Substitution View cannot be refuted from Isaiah 53:5, our analysis illustrates that no trading of places is required from these phrases.

It is important here to emphasize an essential point that keeps coming up. Both the Punishment Substitution and the Ransom View proclaim the fundamental role of Christ’s suffering in order to redeem sinners. Where they differ is with regard to exactly how that suffering accomplishes redemption. Consequently, verses that simply declare the need for the Messiah to suffer in order to redeem sinners do not favor either theory over the other. The only way for a verse to favor one theory over another is if that verse actually contains details that comment on how the suffering brings about redemption. In other words, what we’re looking for is verses that explicitly or unavoidably describe substitution as the mechanism, not merely verses that describe suffering as the mechanism. We have already seen plenty of verses explicitly describing ransom and payment. But we have yet to see anything in passages like 1 Peter 2 or Isaiah 53 that go beyond the more general concept of suffering to the more specific concept of substitution.

This leaves us with the final phrase of Isaiah 53:5: “the chastisement of our peace was upon him.” Certainly, the word “chastisement” is synonymous with

punishment in English. The Hebrew term here is “muwcar” (04148). It, too, can refer to punishment through the idea of discipline. However, the Hebrew word is broader than punishment alone and simply refers to “discipline, chastening, or correction.” While correction can involve punishment, this is not always the case. Sometimes correction can involve instruction or an example.

Here are a few examples of “muwcar” (04148) in the Old Testament where it is translated as a reference to declared instruction (verbal or written) rather than as punishment.

Job 36:10 He openeth also their ear to discipline (04148), and commandeth that they return from iniquity.

Psalms 50:17 Seeing thou hatest instruction (04148), and castest my words behind thee.

Proverbs 1:2 To know wisdom and instruction (04148), to perceive the words of understanding;

Proverbs 1:3 To receive the instruction (04148) of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity;

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction (04148).

Proverbs 1:8 My son, hear the instruction (04148) of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother:

Similarly, the Greek word used in the Septuagint for “chastisement” is “paideia” (3809). Its definition is provided below. As we can see, “paideia” likewise refers to training and education or instruction of children. It does not infer punishment.

3809 paideia

from 3811; TDNT-5:596,753; n f

AV-chastening 3, nurture 1, instruction 1, chastisement 1; 6

1) **the whole training and education of children** (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and **employs** for this purpose now **commands and admonitions**, now reproof and punishment) It also includes the training and care of the body

2) whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing passions.

2a) **instruction which aims at increasing virtue**

2b) chastisement, chastening, (of the evils with which God visits men for their amendment)

This conception of “muwcar” as instruction is certainly allowable in Isaiah 53:5. In this case, Isaiah 53 would be declaring not that Christ was punished to bring us peace, but rather that the instruction that would bring about our peace with God

was from him. Such a statement fits very easily with the Moral Influence aspect of the Ransom View of redemption. It especially fits with passages we looked at earlier such as Romans 6, Romans 12, and Hebrews 12, which compare our choice to turn away from the desires of the body with Jesus' willingness to die on the cross, despite the suffering involved.

In conclusion, we can see that while Isaiah 53:5 can easily be interpreted in line with a Punishment Substitution View of atonement, the passage does not declare or necessitate that model. To the contrary, the verse fits well with the Ransom View and none of its descriptive phrases necessitate an interpretation which would contradict the Ransom View.

Having reviewed 1 Peter 2:20-24 and Isaiah 53, we will now turn our attention to Galatians 3:13.

Galatians 3:13 Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:

The idea expressed in this verse is that we were under the curse of the law and that Christ redeemed us from that curse by being made a curse for us. Let us begin with the portions of this verse which do not pose any apparent difficulty for the Ransom View.

The Ransom View teaches that although he was innocent Christ was unjustly condemned and punished according to Old Testament Law. This faithfully corresponds to the part of Galatians 3:13 which informs us that Christ was "made a curse" as the law states that "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree." In particular, the phrase "Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree," which is quoted from the Old Testament here, informs us of the sense with which the earlier phrase "made a curse" was intended. Christ was "made a curse" in the sense that he was punished as though he were accursed. This simply declares that Christ was innocent and his punishment under the Law of Moses was unjust. Since the Ransom View upholds that the New Testament declares that Christ was hung on a tree there is no difficulty with portion of Galatians 3:13.

Similarly, the Ransom View upholds the initial portion of the verse which declares that we are under the curse of the Law because we have transgressed the commands written in the Law of Moses. Therefore, Galatians 3:13's declaration that we were under the curse of the Law of Moses, that Christ redeemed us from that curse, and that Christ was considered cursed in that he was unjustly condemned to death by hanging on a tree in no way pose any difficulty for the Ransom View.

The only portion of this verse that could be suggested to support the Punishment Substitution View is the phrase "for us" that appears in the middle of the verse. While the Punishment Substitution view could easily take the phrase "for us" to mean that Christ was "made a curse in our place or instead of us," the text of the

passage does not in any way require such an interpretation. In both English and Greek the phrase “for us” can just as easily be intended to denote “for the benefit of another party” as it could possibly mean “in the place of another party.” One can pay a fine “for someone” so that they are released from jail or one can go to jail “for someone” so that they don’t have to go to jail. One could trade places with a hostage or one could pay a ransom to release the hostage. Both acts would be done “for” the hostage. Therefore, Galatians 3:13’s use of the phrase “for us” does not necessitate that Christ was cursed in our place. It only requires that his being cursed was for our benefit. The means by which that benefit is conveyed is not stated. Again, no trading of places or positions is necessitated by the language of the verse.

As Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 2:14 explain, Christ “abolished in his flesh the law of commandments” and “blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that were against us” and “took it away nailing it to the cross.” Elsewhere the New Testament explains that Christ’s removal of the law of Moses by which we were condemned was accomplished by his death (Romans 7:4, Hebrews 2:14, 9:15-17). Clearly, these actions of Christ were done for our benefit. But in no way do they require that the benefit was conveyed by swapping places or positions with Christ, particularly when other options are available, which have already been biblically established, such as the Ransom View.

The most important point here is that once again it is not enough to show merely that Christ was punished. Nor is it sufficient to prove that Christ’s suffering was for our benefit. This verse would need to declare that the punishment he suffered was our punishment. But Galatians 3:13 only requires that “Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, was unjustly marked as accursed or criminal for our benefit.” Simply put, it does not go far enough to prove the Punishment Substitution View. Both in part and as a whole, its components are compatible with the Ransom View and do not necessarily contain any detail that requires substitution for our punishment specifically. Therefore, while Galatians 3:13 could be interpreted to fit with a Punishment Substitution View it does not declare it and instead works just as well with the Ransom View which is elsewhere regularly and plainly declared in the New Testament.

The final verse that we must examine is 2 Corinthians 5:21.

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, **that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;** and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. **20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you **in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.** **21** **For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.**

It should be noted that the phrase “in Christ’s stead” at the end of verse 20 is not a reference to being reconciled to Christ by standing “in Christ’s place.” Instead, the phrase “in Christ’s stead” is in reference to Paul standing in the place of Christ as he beseeches the Corinthians to be reconciled. Conclusive evidence that Paul is

speaking “in Christ’s stead” can be seen in the first half of verse 20 in which Paul says that “we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us.”

Verse 21 is by far the closest we come to a statement in the scripture describing a trading of positions between Christ and sinners regarding punishment. In the King James the text states that Christ was made to be sin for us so that we might be made the righteousness of God. This sounds as if God counts Christ as guilty of sin so that he can consider us to be righteous. Though there is no mention of punishment in this passage, this interpretation does involve the transference of guilt and righteousness.

The critical component of this interpretation comes from the idea that God “made Christ to be sin.” This concept forms the essential first half of the equation allowing the second portion of the verse (“that we are made the righteousness of God”) to be taken as an exchange between two parties wherein an innocent party is substituted for the guilty party and counted as sinful so that the sinful party can be counted as righteousness. Conversely, if this first portion of verse 21 does not mean that God counted Christ as sinful then the idea that there is a substitution between two parties falls apart. There are several problems with interpreting this verse to mean that Christ was made sin.

First, if this passages is interpreted in accordance with the Punishment Substitution View it would tend to convey that God is knowingly condemning an innocent man as sinful in order to knowingly let the guilty go free. While such an action would convey love for the guilty party, it hardly seems just. Proverbs 24:24 states that “He that saith unto the wicked, Thou are righteous; him shall people curse, nations shall abhor him.” Proverbs 17:15 declares, “He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD.” While such passages don’t prohibit God from making an exception or even changing the rules on a large scale, they do give us reason to be cautious about hastily accepting a model of 1 Corinthians 5 or of redemption in general that is fundamentally based on an inherently unjust action like directly substituting the innocent in order to exempt the guilty from punishment. Unless such a conclusion is necessitated scripturally we should perhaps expect and seek an understanding of redemption in which God’s justice is not undermined.

Second, and similarly, we must consider that the Punishment Substitution interpretation of 1 Corinthians 5:21 would indicate that Christ actually became sin. This idea should be uncomfortable for Christians. It is one thing to have Christ pay the punishment or ransom for sin even though he is sinless and doesn’t deserve it. But it is another thing to say that Christ actually became sin especially in light of New Testament texts that maintain Christ’s sinlessness. Moreover, not only is a sinful Christ theologically problematic, but this would be the only verse in scripture asserting such a problematic idea. Again, perhaps we should see if another explanation is more exegetically warranted before we adopt such a conclusion.

Third, and most importantly, we should consider the phrase “Christ was made sin” in light of its historical and grammatical context. As we covered earlier, the Old Testament required sacrifices to be made in order to atone for sin. From the Old Testament’s descriptions of such sacrifices we get the term “sin offering.” In fact, there are a number of passages which use the phrase “sin offering.” A few of those passages are listed below and, as we can see, the sacrifices described in these passages were very closely connected to atonement.

Exodus 29:36 And thou shalt offer every day a bullock for a sin offering (02403) for atonement: and thou shalt cleanse the altar, when thou hast made an atonement for it, and thou shalt anoint it, to sanctify it.

Exodus 30:10 And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering (02403) of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the LORD.

Leviticus 4:3 If the priest that is anointed do sin according to the sin of the people; then let him bring for his sin (02403), which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the LORD for a sin offering (02403).

Leviticus 4:20 And he shall do with the bullock as he did with the bullock for a sin offering (02403), so shall he do with this: and the priest shall make an atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them.

Leviticus 16:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered before the LORD, and died; 2 **And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the vail before the mercy seat,** which is upon the ark; that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. 3 **Thus shall Aaron come into the holy place: with a young bullock for a sin offering (02403),** and a ram for a burnt offering.

The point worth noting is that in these verses, “sin offering” is translated from a single Hebrew word “chatta’ah” (02403). As we can see from the definition below, “Chatta’ah” is simply a common Hebrew word for “sin.” There is no accompanying word for “offering.”

02403 chatta’ah

from 02398; n f; {See TWOT on 638 @@ "638e"}

AV-sin 182, sin offering 116, punishment 3, purification for sin 2, purifying 1, sinful 1, sinner 1; 296

1) sin, sinful

2) sin, sin offering

2a) sin

2b) condition of sin, guilt of sin

2c) punishment for sin

2d) sin-offering

2e) purification from sins of ceremonial uncleanness

Furthermore, below are the scriptural passages before Exodus 29 that use “chatta’ah” (02403) to denote sin.

Genesis 4:7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and **if thou doest not well, sin (02403) lieth at the door.** And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

Genesis 18:20 And the LORD said, Because **the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin (02403) is very grievous;**

Genesis 31:36 And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban: and Jacob answered and said to Laban, **What is my trespass? what is my sin (02403),** that thou hast so hotly pursued after me?

Genesis 50:17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, **Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin (02403); for they did unto thee evil:** and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

Exodus 10:17 Now therefore **forgive, I pray thee, my sin (02403) only this once,** and intreat the LORD your God, that he may take away from me this death only.

Similarly, the term “sin offerings” is translated in the Septuagint Greek translations of these Old Testament with only the Greek word for “sin” (“hamartia,” 266) without an accompanying word for “offering.” In this way, an offering made to atone for sins can and is biblically referred to as simply “sin” (“chatta’ah” or “hamartia”). With this in mind we return to 2 Corinthians 5:21.

2 Corinthians 5:21 **For he hath made him to be sin for us,** who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Here in the Greek, we have Paul stating that God made Christ to be “sin” for us. Our investigation into the Old Testament history and language regarding offerings for sin gives us good reason to consider an alternative interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:21. With the Old Testament precedent of referring to “sin offerings” solely with the Hebrew or Greek word for “sin” we can interpret this verse as follows: “For God has made Christ to be a sin offering for us.” This interpretation is completely justifiable and consistent with the biblical language and history on the subject of atonement and sin offerings. In other words, if we interpret 2 Corinthians 5 from the perspective of a first century Jewish man, such as Paul, who was familiar with both the Hebrew and Greek translations of the Old Testament, we can see that there is no reason to interpret “sin” in 2 Corinthians 5 as a reference to guilt, being counted as a sinner, or anything other than the normal, expected description of Christ simply as an atonement offering.

In order to fully establish this point, we need to address the second occurrence of “sin” (“hamartia” 266) in verse 21, which states that Christ “knew no sin.” Here a critical question arises. How can we interpret the first occurrence of “sin” in verse 21 as a reference to an offering and the second occurrence of “sin” in the same verse as a reference to “sin?” For the sake of consistent interpretation, doesn’t the second occurrence of “sin” prove that the first occurrence cannot refer to an offering? However, there are two reasons that our interpretation of the first use of “hamartia” as “sin offering” is not problematic in this regard.

First, inconsistent interpretation can be avoided by also interpreting the second “hamartia” in verse 21 as “sin offering.” The verse would then state that God “made Christ to be a sin offering for us, though he knew no sin offerings.” In the Jewish culture established by the Law of Moses, stating that Christ himself “knew no sin offerings” would still be an equally effective way to convey that Christ was sinless. Two clarifying points are worth making here.

Number one, regardless of how the word “sin” is interpreted in 2 Corinthians 5:21, the word “knew” does not speak of knowledge in the sense of the awareness of information or concepts. The passage does not mean to convey that Christ was ignorant that sin existed or that he was unaware of what sin was on a conceptual level. Rather, the word “knew” here refers to the idea of being acquainted with something by virtue of personal practice. In other words, Christ had not practiced sin. Likewise, if this second occurrence of “hamartia” refers to “sin offering,” the verse would be saying that Christ had not personally practiced bringing sin offerings for himself.

Number two, Leviticus 4 (which we saw earlier) lays out at length the commandments for offerings to be brought by various individuals when they sin, including a priest, a ruler, the whole congregation, or even a common man. We see the instructions regarding the common man. The instructions regarding the common man begin in chapter 4:22 and continue into chapter 5:9 and so on with the word “chatta’ah” being used frequently throughout the passage in reference to both the sin and the atoning offering made for sin. The passage creates a clear expectation that anyone who sinned was required to bring a sin offering and anyone who brought a sin offering was a sinner. Consequently, within the Jewish frame of reference, to say that someone was not personally experienced with making sin offerings is to convey that they had no need to do so because they had not sinned. This is also seen in Leviticus 4:3 (quoted above), which discusses the potential need for a priest to bring an offering for his own sin. In this way 2 Corinthians 5:21 would simply be stating that Christ did not need any sin offerings for himself.

And even more to the point, if we interpret this passage from within Paul’s own frame of reference as a Jewish man familiar with the Law of Moses, then there is no inconsistency with the meaning of “hamartia” in 2 Corinthians 5. It can be interpreted as a reference to sin offerings in both occurrences while still preserving the important testimony that Jesus was sinless.

Second, the consistency may not really be an issue in the first place. It should be noted that passages like Leviticus 4:3 and 5:6 likewise show that the same Hebrew word for “sin” (“chatta’ah” 2398) can be used in a single verse to refer to sin and to a sin offering. Likewise, in these same verses the Septuagint Greek uses “hamartia” (266) to refer to both sin and a sin offering. In short, the same word is often used with two different meanings within a single verse. So, again Old Testament usage and precedent inform us that it is completely allowable to interpret these words in two different ways within a single verse. With the Old Testament context in mind, translating “hamartia” in 2 Corinthians 5:21 first as “sin offering” and then as “sin” cannot be criticized as poor exegesis.

Hermeneutically and theologically speaking then we have a sound basis for interpreting “hamartia” as “sin offering” in (at least) the first part of 2 Corinthians 5:21. This interpretation removes the possibility of 2 Corinthians 5:21 as support for the Punishment Substitution View. With “hamartia” (266) interpreted as “sin offering” rather than merely as sin, the Punishment Substitution View’s transaction is decoupled. No longer do we have Christ who is righteous becoming sin (or being counted as sinful) so that we who are sinful become righteous. Now we have Christ becoming a sin offering so that we can be atoned for and righteous. With the necessary Old Testament context in place, 2 Corinthians 5:21 provides no support for the Punishment Substitution View of atonement. Instead, all we have is Paul declaring that Christ was a sin offering for us in order to make us righteous before God. Such a statement is hardly incompatible with the Ransom View of redemption and certainly does not warrant the Punishment Substitution View.

Section Five: Conclusions and Preview of Our Redemption Study

In this extended introduction to our Redemption Study series, we have covered several main points related to Christ’s atoning work.

In Section One, we identified different theological models for how Christ provides redemption for sin. We learned that there are two main systems for explaining redemption. The first system we have called the Ransom View. It includes three different, but related descriptions of Christ’s work as redeemer: the Ransom Theory, the Victor Theory, and the Moral Influence Theory. All three of these components were taught alongside one another in the earliest period of the church. They hold that the bible teaches that Christ atoned for sin in terms of a ransom payment paid by his sacrificial death, a conquest of the devil and liberation of sinful men from bondage to the devil, and a moral rehabilitation of sinful men to obedience to God’s will and conformity to Christ. This was the understanding of Christ’s redeeming work that was held by Christians for the first 1,000-1,500 years or so of church history.

The other main model can be called the Punishment Substitution View. This model holds that Christ atoned for our sins by trading positions with sinful men

and taking their punishments so that they would not have to suffer those consequences. While this view has enjoyed a prominent status in more recent periods of the church, its basic tenets were first put forward in the eleventh century with additional modern components added during the Protestant Reformation.

In Section Two of this study, we provided quotes from prominent Faith Movement teachers who all espoused the Punishment Substitution model of redemption. Our intention was not to render more moderate theologians guilty by association. But the remarks by Faith Movement teachers displayed an inherent difficulty present in this view that applies to all who hold to it, whether they realize it or not. If Christ atones by trading places with sinners and undergoing the punishments merited by their sin and one of those punishments is separation from fellowship with God, then it would logically follow that Christ would have to suffer a loss of fellowship with God. For Trinitarians who hold to the divinity of Christ, this logically unavoidable correlation to the Punishment Substitution View is biblically unsound and theologically impossible. These difficulties inform us that the Punishment Substitution View of redemption does not offer a coherent understanding of how Christ accomplishes atonement for sin. Put simply, if Christ atones for us by taking our place in punishment then either his fellowship with God was severed or he did not take our place in that punishment, in which case we would still be subject to it and not reconciled to God. Likewise, the Punishment Substitution View implies that the punishment has already been served and, consequently, that those Christ substituted for would not die. However, the fact that Christians still die would likewise undermine the conclusion that Christ took our place in capital punishment. If, as the Punishment Substitution View holds, Christ accomplishes our atonement by substituting for us in punishment, then it is untenable to maintain that our atonement to God has been accomplished by the same mechanism which apparently has not managed to prevent our deaths.

In Section Three, we assessed the biblical support for each of our two main views of redemption. If the Punishment Substitution View were biblically sound surely we would expect to find terms in the New Testament that inherently and unavoidably convey its ideas. But we do not. Nowhere does the New Testament state that Christ was punished for our sin or in our place. Although scripture describes how Jesus' was unjustly punished according to Roman and Jewish law as a matter of historical events, it never describes redemption in terms of Jesus bearing our punishment or being punished in our places. In contrast, it is easy to find New Testament statements describing Jesus' atoning work in terminology inherently conveying the Ransom View of redemption. The fact that we don't have this kind of attestation in support of the Punishment Substitution View coupled with the lack of attestation that it was known prior to the eleventh century AD constitutes a serious problem for accepting this view of redemption as biblically sound. These facts and considerations lead to the conclusion that the Ransom View finds a great deal of support in New Testament passages discussing Christ's atoning work while at the same time it is exceedingly difficult to find

passages in scripture which support, let alone declare, the Punishment Substitution View.

In Section Four of this study, we took a look at four particular passages that might be appealed to as support the Punishment Substitution View. An examination of those passages (1 Peter 2:20-24, Isaiah 53:5, 11-12, Galatians 3:13, and 2 Corinthians 5:21) provides no warrant for adopting the Punishment Substitution View of redemption.

We also looked at Hebrews 7:26-27 and 9:28 in comparison to 1 Peter 2:20-24. As a result we saw that 1 Peter 2:24 speaks of Christ's work as high priest. We also saw from Leviticus 10 that the high priest does not "bear the sins" of the people by trading places with sinners so that they are accepted by God while he is rejected. Rather, the phrase "bear the sins" refers to the high priest conducting the responsibility and work of making an offering. Similarly, Isaiah 53:5 only requires the acknowledgment that Christ would be wounded and bruised in order to provide atonement for our sins. It doesn't necessitate that he would be punished in our place. Nor does it indicate that he was chastised in our place. Rather, it states that Christ provided the instruction by which we can be at peace with God, an idea that is completely compatible with the Moral Influence component of the Ransom View. Galatians 3:13 teaches that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by being put to death under the curse of the law. This was done to benefit us. In other words, it was done so that Christ could remove the law which condemned us and in that way we could be redeemed. And lastly, when interpreted in the biblical context of atonement, 2 Corinthians 5:21 merely states that Christ was made a sin offering for us so that we could be righteous before God. Nothing in these texts declares or warrants a punishment substitution model for atonement.

This leads us to our final question in this study. If Christ doesn't accomplish atonement by substituting for sinners in their punishments so that they no longer have to undergo those punishments, then how does Christ atone for us? Can we know more specifically how Christ's sacrificial death works as a ransom, as redemption, and as an effective means for moral rehabilitation of sinners?

These questions will be answered in greater biblical depth in our Redemption Study which immediately follows this Long Introduction article. Even greater biblical depth will be given in regard to this question in the other studies that we have included on the Redemption Page of our website. At this point, we will provide a basic preview outlining Christ's redemptive work as taught in the Ransom View. Here we only intend a brief summary of this model. The rest of our Redemption Study will describe and demonstrate it more fully from the scripture.

A Brief Summary of Christ's Atoning Work as Understood in the Ransom View:

The bible teaches that in order to redeem sinful men Jesus had to become a man also. This was necessary so that he would be mortal and therefore capable of physically dying. As a man he had to live and remain sinless so that he would not personally deserve the condemnation and bondage which are the consequence of sin. He then had to die. His physical death was necessary for several reasons. First, since Christ is God and therefore a party to the first covenant his death provides the means for the removal of the first covenant by which we are condemned to death and removed from fellowship with God. Second, his death also puts into place his will which is the new covenant. Third his unjust death is what necessitates resurrection, particularly immortal resurrection (not just mortal resuscitation). His resurrection provides the promise of eternal life which is a better hope effective for eliciting repentance and obedience in sinful men. Furthermore, Christ's unjust death also brings about the condemnation of the authorities who wielded the power of death over sinful men and provides the basis for their authority to be stripped from them and instead awarded to Christ.

Having proven himself mature and utterly complete in obedience, Christ demonstrated that he is worthy to judge all men (and angels) and to determine which are worthy of eternal separation and damnation. Likewise, since he had shown himself to be mature in character without fail throughout his entire life, even having obeyed in the face of suffering and death, Christ was no longer in need of being tested in regard to sin. Nor was there a need for him to remain potentially subject to death. Therefore, his resurrection was not merely mortal resuscitation, but an immortal resurrection to eternal life.

His sinless life and obedience to God also fulfilled the Law of Moses including: the required obedience to its ordinances as well as the purposes foreshadowed by sacrificial ritual. Since he fulfilled the Law of Moses these things can pass away having served their purpose. This again provides the basis for the removal of the Law of Moses and its ordinances which formally codified and prescribed death and removal from fellowship for men who sin. Since the Law of Moses has been fulfilled and removed, we no longer stand condemned by it. Our consciences (awareness of guilt for sin) are therefore cleansed by Christ.

However, Christ also had to issue a New Covenant Law to replace the Old Covenant Law. The New Law is necessary so that men would not be without a Law or Covenant. These things provide an arrangement between God and men regarding consequences for sin as well as the dispensing of promises and inheritance to the repentant. The New Covenant likewise establishes the basis for Christ's acceptance or condemnation of men when he establishes his kingdom over the earth. Therefore, Christ has exemplified the moral obligations of God as seen in both the Old and New Laws and has issued teachings so that men know what's right, can turn from sin and the carnal mind, and no longer be at enmity with God by virtue of being conformed to the image of Christ through obedience to his teachings. With this enmity removed, fellowship can be restored and the need to be separated from God is ended.

It is also important to state that since God had made promises and covenants with men over the course of his redemptive plan, Christ had to be a descendent of these men in order to inherit the things God had promised to them. In this way, Christ, the righteous heir, inherits the earth as the seed of Eve, Abraham, and David, conquers the devil who held sinful men in bondage, establishes God's kingdom on earth, and restores back to life and fellowship with God those who repent of sin and follow his teachings and example.

This brief description shows how the Ransom View can present a working model for how Christ atones for sin without Christ having to trade places with sinners and take their punishment for them. It also shows how the Ransom View contains aspects of redemption by means of Christ providing ransom from bondage, victoriously conquering sinful men's captor, and providing a moral example and instruction to motivate men to turn from sin. Although we have only given a description of the Ransom View here, our Redemption Study and the supplemental studies which accompany it on the Redemption page of our website will provide an in-depth investigation of the biblical revelation of these issues.