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THE COURTROOM AND THE CREATED ORDER:
HOW PENAL SUBSTITUTION BRINGS
ABOUT NEW CREATION

A Dissertation
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Lee Daniel Tankersley
December 2010

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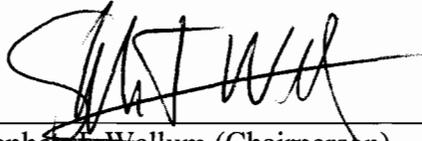
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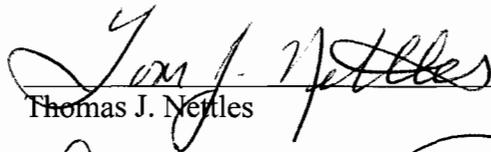
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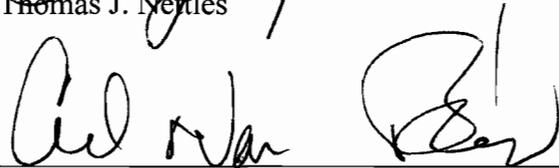
Read and Approved by:



Stephen J. Wellum (Chairperson)



Thomas J. Nettles



Chad Owen Brand

Date NOVEMBER 5, 2010

To Lili,

“Many women have done excellently, but
you surpass them all.” – Proverbs 31:29

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
AcBib	Academica Biblica
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANF	The Ante-Nicene Fathers
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
AOTC	Apollos Old Testament Commentary
<i>BBR</i>	<i>Bulletin for Biblical Research</i>
BDAG	W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 3 rd edition.
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentary
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
<i>BSTR</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra and Theological Review</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCT	Contours of Christian Theology
<i>EBC</i>	<i>The Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
<i>ExpTim</i>	<i>Expository Times</i>
FET	Foundations of Evangelical Theology
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>

<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IJPR</i>	<i>International Journal of Philosophy and Religion</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JPSTC	Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament – Supplement Series</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament – Supplement Series</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
LPS	Library of Pauline Studies
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
NAC	New American Commentary
NCB	New Century Bible
NDBT	<i>New Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i>
NIBC	New International Biblical Commentary
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
NIVAp	NIV Application Commentary

NSBT	New Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OTL	Old Testament Library
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>RelS</i>	<i>Religious Studies</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
SBAT	Studies in Biblical Apocalyptic Literature
<i>SBET</i>	<i>Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology</i>
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>SBTJ</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SCB</i>	<i>Science & Christian Belief</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZECNT	Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament

PREFACE

This work would have been impossible for me to complete without the encouragement, help, and support of so many. I have been blessed immensely in life, and I am certain that these words will fall far short of the gratitude I owe. I first thank God who graciously opened my eyes to see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. I am continually overwhelmed that he has declared me righteous through faith in his crucified and risen Son. The atoning work of Christ is not simply an object of study for me but the foundation and content of my eternal hope.

One of God's greatest means of grace to me is Cornerstone Community Church. I was only able to embark on this project because of the kindness of this church in granting me a two-year sabbatical in the summer of 2007. The members of this church are not simply those whom I am privileged to pastor but my family, friends, and treasured companions alongside whom I walk in life. It is one of the greatest honors in my life to link arms with them as we walk toward the Celestial City. I love you all and thank God daily for allowing me to be with you. I am especially grateful for the two men there who pastor me, Ray Van Neste and Nathan Young. You both are treasured gifts from God.

I am also deeply appreciative for those friends who worked alongside me and aided me throughout my time in Louisville. When I sat down in the library on the first day of my study and saw the two guys sitting across from me, I had no idea what a gift

God was giving me in placing me next to Jeremy Kimble and John Meade. Jeremy, thanks for pressing me to keep my head down and work, and, John, thanks for being willing to take a senseless break with me whenever I asked. You cannot imagine how much joy you brought to my work when I would leave my family, walk into the library late at night, and find that I was not alone in my labors. Thanks as well to Oren Martin, Micah McCormick, Luke Stamps, and Aaron O'Kelley who each encouraged me along the way and whose encouragement continued even after my time in Louisville. I also want to thank Mike Evans, Bob Cali, and Brent Parker for helping me to obtain the resources I needed along the way. You all did more for me than I deserved.

There were several others who helped in the writing of the project itself. My doctoral supervision, Stephen Wellum, has gone above and beyond in his help and guidance throughout the duration of this project. This time of study alongside him has revealed to me that his intellectual gifts are equally matched by his kindness, thoughtfulness, and willingness to serve others. I count it an incredible honor and privilege to be able to say that I studied under him and to call him a friend. Thanks as well to Tom Nettles, Chad Brand, Robert Peterson, and Marsha Omanson for their helpful feedback. Each of these has helped make this work better than it otherwise would have been. In addition, I want to note the gratitude I owe to Bruce Ware. His encouragement in all areas of life before, during, and since my time in Louisville is a rich and constant reminder of God's kindness to me.

I also want to acknowledge the prayers and support of my family members. Sam and Dottie, you are the best in-laws anyone could imagine. Thank you for your support, encouragement, prayers, and willingness to love me as a son. Dad and Mom, I

cannot thank God enough for allowing me to be born into your home. Know that it is with deepest affection and for years of love, prayers, and support that I say to you, “Thank you.” I love you both so much. To Brad, Sabrina, and Nickie, I thank God for each of you. My children are so blessed to have you all in their lives. And to them – Michael, Marie, and Luke – thank you for the delight and joy you bring to my life. Leaving you at times to go work in the library was one of the hardest things I had to do and coming home to you one of my richest joys. I love you so much more than you can imagine.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my wife, Lili. Throughout our ten years of marriage, she has been a constant and consistent reminder of God’s love. And her love, support, and kindness toward me have never been more evident than over these past few years. Lili, thank you for being willing to leave our home for two years, for putting our children to bed so many times without me, for reading multiple papers I wrote along the way, for believing that I am a much better husband and father than I know I am, for encouraging me when my motivation was low, and for being the greatest wife any man could have. I love you, and I’ll love you forever.

Lee Daniel Tankersley

Jackson, Tennessee

December 2010

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Current Setting of the Debate

“We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor 1:23).¹ That declaration by Paul is sufficient justification for a study which focuses on the atonement. This central tenet of the Christian faith must be proclaimed in every age.² It is no secret, however, that penal substitutionary atonement³ has come under increasing attack in recent years.⁴ Current

¹All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2001), unless otherwise noted.

²Gathercole noted in a recent paper on the atonement: “A paper about the atonement should need no justification. If the doctrine is under attack (as it frequently is) then there is a need to expound and defend it biblically against its cultured despisers. Even if it is not explicitly under attack, the centrality of the atonement to Christian doctrine requires that we continue to preach and teach it.” Simon J. Gathercole, “The Cross and Substitutionary Atonement,” *SBET* 21, no. 2 (2003): 152.

³Schreiner provides a good definition of penal substitution, writing, “I define penal substitution as follows: The Father, because of his love for human beings, sent his Son (who offered himself willingly and gladly) to satisfy God’s justice, so that Christ took the place of sinners. The punishment and penalty we deserved was laid on Jesus Christ instead of us, so that in the cross both God’s holiness and love are manifested.” Thomas R. Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 67.

⁴For some recent arguments against penal substitution, see Steve Chalke, “The Redemption of the Cross,” in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 34-45; Steve Chalke and Alan Mann, *The Lost Message of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 182-83; Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 59-69; J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001); Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000); Tom Smail, *Once for All: A Confession of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1998); John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 113-32; Stephen H. Travis, “Christ as the Bearer of Divine Judgment in Paul’s Thought about the Atonement,” in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 332-45; Clark H. Pinnock and Robert C. Brow, *Unbounded Love: A Good News Theology for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994),

charges against penal substitution have come in the form of claims that it pictures cosmic child abuse,⁵ that it inappropriately portrays the unity and distinction of the persons of the Trinity,⁶ and that it is unintelligible to the modern mind and to many cultures⁷ (among many others).⁸

The fact that penal substitution is under attack is not surprising, for charges against this understanding of the atonement stem back at least as far as the sixteenth century with the Socinians,⁹ surfaced again with a number of publications through the

99-110; Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989).

⁵Chalke and Mann, *The Lost Message*, 182-83; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 32; J. Denny Weaver, *A Nonviolent Atonement*, 204; Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker, "For God So Loved the World?" in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, ed. Joane Carson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim, 1989), 26; Rita Nokashima Brock, "And a Little Child Will Lead Us: Christology and Child Abuse," in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, ed. Joane Carson Brown and Carole R. Bohn (New York: Pilgrim, 1989), 51-53; Brian D. McLaren, *The Story We Find Ourselves In: Further Adventures of a New Kind of Christian* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 100-08. McLaren uses a character in his book to claim that penal satisfaction "sounds like divine child abuse" (102). He then goes on to say that it is merely one of five or six theories of the atonement but never refutes the charge of child abuse connected with penal satisfaction.

⁶This charge notes that penal substitution depends upon the Son's sacrifice appeasing the Father, which opponents of penal substitution find separates the persons of the Godhead more than is possible. See Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 108-09; Tom Smail, *Once for All: A Confession of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1998), 86-88; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 57; Weaver, *A Nonviolent Atonement*, 203-04.

⁷Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 29, 32, 148, 203; Fiddes, *Past and Present Salvation*, 102-03.

⁸For a survey of objections to penal substitution and responses to those objections, see Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Nottingham, England: Inter-Varsity, 2007), 208-324.

⁹Faustus Socinus set forth his arguments against penal substitution in writing with *De Jesu Christo Servatore* near the end of the sixteenth century. His argument was eventually incorporated into *The Racovian Catechism*. The *Catechism* sketches the history and theology of Unitarianism and was originally written in Polish for publication in 1605. The work would undergo revisions, and it was ultimately translated into English by Thomas Rees and subsequently published. See *The Racovian Catechism*, trans. Thomas Rees (London: Paternoster Row, 1818).

Socinus's *De Jesu Christo Servatore* was ill-received upon its initial exposure to the public. His biographer notes that the release of this book in 1594 among the student body at Cracow nearly led to Socinus's death. He writes, "But above all, after the Printing of his Book, *Concerning the Savior* . . . the Adversaries again began to show the Rancour of their Hatred. Whereupon, in the Year 1598, the Scholars

nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries,¹⁰ and came to the fore with the writings of C. H. Dodd¹¹ in the middle of the twentieth century.¹² What *is* surprising is that the attacks are no longer confined to non-evangelicals. Rather, the last twenty years have been witness to a surprising trend in which numerous professing evangelicals have argued that penal substitution is no longer an acceptable or biblical understanding of Christ's atoning work.¹³

This continued onslaught against penal substitution and the trend of those now attacking it broadening to include evangelicals have not taken place because there have been no responses to these attacks. On the contrary, the responses have been numerous and consistent. Just as one can trace the writings of those attacking penal substitution

(*scholastici*), having stirred up the Dregs of the Rabble, took Socinus, being then sick and minding the Recovery of his Health, and pulling him out of his Chamber half naked, dragged him in a contumelious Manner through the Market, and the most noted Streets, the greatest part, in the mean Time, crying out, To have him brought to Execution. At length, having been grievously handled in that furious Rout, he was, with much ado, rescued out of the Hands of the raging Multitude by Martin Wadowita, Professor of Cracow." Samuel Przypkowski, *The Life of That Incomparable Man Faustus Socinus of Siena*, in *History of the Polish Reformation and Nine Related Documents*, trans. George Huntston Williams (Minneapolis: Fortress, Harvard Theological Studies, 1995), 385-86 (capitalization original).

¹⁰See, for example, J. McLeod Campbell, *The Nature of the Atonement* (Cambridge: MacMillan, 1856; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1999), esp. 114-26; Horace Bushnell, *The Vicarious Sacrifice: Grounded in Principles Interpreted by Human Analogies* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903); R. C. Moberly, *Atonement and Personality* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907).

¹¹See C. H. Dodd, "ἸΛΑΣΚΕΣΘΑΙ, Its Cognates, Derivatives and Synonyms in the Septuagint," *Journal of Theological Studies* 32 (1931): 352-60; idem, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), 54-55; idem, *The Johannine Epistles* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946), 25-26. Dodd notes that ἰλασμὸν has been "traditionally (but infelicitously) translated" as propitiation. *Ibid.*, 112.

¹²Of course there were other works rejecting penal substitution as the foundational understanding of the atonement throughout this time frame as well. Gustaf Aulén's *Christus Victor* declared that the *Christus Victor* model of the atonement was the classical teaching of this doctrine. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1950).

¹³This group of professing evangelicals arguing against penal substitution includes (but is not limited to): Clark Pinnock, Joel Green, Stephen Travis, Mark Baker, Paul Fiddes, Christopher Marshall, and J. Denny Weaver. For examples where these authors have argued against penal substitution, see n. 4, above.

through the centuries, so it is no struggle to find responses to these attacks throughout this same period. Works from Francis Turretin,¹⁴ A. A. Hodge,¹⁵ and Herman Bavinck¹⁶ represent a sample of responses spanning the seventeenth to early twentieth centuries, while responses throughout the latter part of the twentieth century came mainly from the writings of Roger Nicole,¹⁷ Leon Morris,¹⁸ J. I. Packer,¹⁹ and John Stott.²⁰ Also, nearly all evangelical systematic theologies written during this timeframe have designated portions responding to charges against penal substitution.²¹

Additionally, strong response has come from those associated with Oak Hill Theological College in London. After a symposium at St John's College in Nottingham led to the publication of *Atonement Today*²² in Great Britain in 1995 and *The Death of*

¹⁴ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. 2, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994), 417-38.

¹⁵ A. A. Hodge, *The Atonement* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1867).

¹⁶ Herman Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ, Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), esp. 399-406. Though this work was published in English in 2006, Bavinck's four volumes of the first edition of *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* were published in the years of 1895 through 1901.

¹⁷ Roger Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," *WTJ* 17 (1954-55): 117-52; idem, "Hilaskesthai Revisited," *EQ* 49 (1977): 173-77.

¹⁸ Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965); idem, *The Epistle to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 180-84.

¹⁹ J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve: The Logic of Penal Substitution," *TynBul* 25 (1973): 3-45; idem, "The Heart of the Gospel," in *Knowing God*, 20th anniversary ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 179-99.

²⁰ John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986); idem, *Romans: God's Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 108-18.

²¹ For example, Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 387-88, 392-93; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 801-02; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 581-82; A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1878; reprint, Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1999), 414-15, 422-23.

*Jesus in Early Christianity*²³ was published in America that same year (both of which attacked penal substitution), the Oak Hill School of Theology responded with a symposium of their own, defending penal substitution, and the papers were subsequently published in the 2001 volume, *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet*.²⁴ Then, six years later, three authors (again with ties to Oak Hill Theological College) joined together to produce a further (and more expansive) response to the attacks against penal substitution with the publication of *Pierced for Our Transgressions*.²⁵

The Need for Greater Response

As noted, however, despite the numerous responses, the attacks against penal substitution have continued,²⁶ and the circle of those no longer content to understand the

²²Goldingay notes in his introduction to this collection of essays that the symposium at St John's College was born out of a letter he had received from Tom Smail in which Smail argued that evangelicals needed to address "what kind of contemporary model can make the whole notion of atonement accessible to people" and then asserted, "The biblical ones by themselves will not do it." John Goldingay, "Introduction," in *Atonement Today*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 1995), xi.

²³After publishing this volume alongside John Carroll, Joel Green then partnered with Mark Baker in the publication of *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross* in 2001, which again focused attack on penal substitution.

²⁴Peterson notes in his introduction to this volume his surprise at the recent attacks coming from evangelicals. He writes, "The penal view has had a succession of formidable critics throughout the centuries, questioning whether it is biblical, moral, and appropriate as a way of explaining and proclaiming the saving work of Christ. But what is unusual about the last decade is the fact that several writers from the evangelical movement have stepped forward to join them." David Peterson, "Introduction" in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), xii.

²⁵Arguing for the necessity of this volume and recognizing the continuing attack against penal substitution, the authors note in this work, "But the most pressing reason why this book is necessary is that the misconceived criticisms of penal substitution show no sign of abating, and the resulting confusion within the Christian community seems to be increasing rather than decreasing." Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 31.

²⁶One could argue that it is not surprising at all that attacks against penal substitution have continued despite the numerous responses because those continuing to attack penal substitution have failed to interact with those arguments put forth by its defenders. Green and Baker, for example, largely ignore the writings of John Stott and Leon Morris. Concerning Morris, they reference him only twice in

cross in this manner has broadened. Some might suggest, then, that the greatest need of this hour is to recognize the current trend and give way to it, especially since much has already been written in an attempt to thwart this trend and has seemingly failed.²⁷

However, if the atonement is central to Christianity and if penal substitution is seen as the foundational understanding of the atonement,²⁸ then there is no choice but to answer every challenge to this central tenet of the Christian faith—to “contend for the faith once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). Gathercole is surely right in stating, “If the doctrine is under attack (as it frequently is) then there is a need to expound and defend it biblically against its cultured despisers.”²⁹ It is this recognition that motivates this present study as an attempt to answer yet another charge against penal substitution.³⁰

Recovering the Scandal of the Cross, each time in footnotes. In the first instance, it is to say that they, unlike Morris, will be “less interested in the appearance of particular *vocabulary* and more concerned with the *concept* of atonement” (36 n. 2, emphasis original). In the second, it is simply to show that Morris disagrees with an argument they quote approvingly from Stephen Travis (95 n. 15). Thus, they fail to engage Morris’s arguments themselves or to deal directly with his findings. Simultaneously, they nearly ignore Stott’s argument in *The Cross of Christ* altogether, only referencing him to approve his recognition of God’s love and mercy (202 n. 2). The negligence of interacting with Stott’s arguments is perhaps most surprising, since he represents in their minds someone who argues inconsistently in upholding penal substitution and recognizing God as one who is loving and merciful (202).

²⁷After listing a number of charges against penal substitution, Green has noted, “That the champions of the model of penal substitutionary atonement will claim to have resolved, or to be able now to resolve, these varied questions, I have no doubt. Indeed, I imagine that these champions will find incredulous the reality that I and others remain unconvinced by attempts thus far to satisfy such questions as these, *just as I and others are incredulous that these questions have not already toppled the hegemony of the theory of penal substitutionary atonement within evangelical Christianity.*” Green, “Must We Imagine?,” 167 (emphasis added).

²⁸Schreiner writes, “I am claiming that penal substitution functions as the anchor and foundation for all other dimensions of the atonement when the Scriptures are considered as a canonical whole” (“Penal Substitution View,” 67). For similar claims/arguments, see Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 133-63; David Peterson, ed., *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), xiv; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 21; Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, FET (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 171-75; Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve,” 3; Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, CCT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 132-39.

²⁹Gathercole, “The Cross and Substitutionary Atonement,” 152.

The Challenge of Redeeming the Cosmos

Among the numerous attacks against penal substitution, one challenge that needs more attention is the charge that penal substitutionary atonement cannot account for God's ultimate purpose in bringing about the new creation because "it does not inherently address the cosmos."³¹ Joel Green has articulated this charge that penal substitution does not address the redemption of the created order most clearly, writing,

The prevailing model of the atonement, focused as it is on the individual, on a forensic judgment, and on the moment of justification, is an obstacle to a thoroughgoing soteriology oriented toward holiness of life. That is, an exaggerated focus on an objective atonement and on salvation as transaction undermines any emphasis on salvation as transformation, and it obscures the . . . cosmological dimensions of salvation. If the purpose of God will be actualized in the restoration of all things, then how is this purpose served by a theory of penal substitutionary atonement?³²

Therefore, though Green argues that one should hold to multiple models of the atonement,³³ he does not see the validity of penal substitution in fulfilling God's ultimate purposes.³⁴ Rather, describing the cross in terms of penal substitution provides an

³⁰Seeing the need for continued response is not in any way an attempt to make light of or overlook those efforts that have come before. Were it not for the efforts in defending the atonement throughout the last number of centuries, the present work would need to be much more expansive. Therefore, my hope is that this work is one that honors the efforts of those who have come before, standing on their shoulders in hopes of adding to their efforts.

³¹Joel B. Green, "Kaleidoscopic Response," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 114.

³²Green, "Must We Imagine?," 166; for similar charges, see Tom Smail, "Can One Man Die for the People?" in *Atonement Today: A Symposium at St. John's College, Nottingham*, ed. John Goldingay, 73-92 (London: SPCK, 1995), 89; Vernon White, *Atonement and Incarnation: An Essay in Universalism and Particularity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 102; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 213-14.

³³See Green, "Kaleidoscopic View," 165-85.

³⁴Green has argued sternly against the biblical validity of penal substitution, writing, "Indeed, the inference that God's wrath might be turned away from sinful humanity only by God's finding in Jesus a substitute object for his wrath is both logically unnecessary and exegetically suspect" ("Must We Imagine?," 161). Additionally, he has written, "Paul uses an almost inexhaustible series of metaphors to

“obstacle to a thoroughgoing soteriology,” “undermines any emphasis on salvation as transformation,” “obscures the . . . cosmological dimensions of salvation,” and does not clearly serve the purpose of God in restoring all things.³⁵

The reason Green dismisses penal substitution is that he cannot discern how an understanding of the atonement that focuses on forensic realities and the justification of individuals (as opposed to transformative realities and focus on all of creation) can account for the restoration of the cosmos. One might paraphrase Green’s charge by asking, “What do individuals in the courtroom have to do with the transformation of the created order?”

Why This Challenge Needs Answering

Such a charge needs to be answered for a variety of reasons. The first of these is the reality that God’s goal in salvation is indeed the restoration of the created order. Because there is agreement between proponents and opponents of penal substitution that God’s intention is to restore the cosmos,³⁶ if penal substitution fails to contribute to this

represent the significance of Jesus’ death, and penal substitution (at least as popularly defined) is not one of them” (Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*, 263). Lest one read Green’s note “at least as popularly defined” as an understanding that he denies some popular representation of penal substitution and yet holds to a traditional understanding of the doctrine, Green includes a note in which he quotes Paul Fiddes saying that that understanding of the atonement which must be denied is a theory “in which atonement is achieved via a transfer of penalty.” Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 98, quoted by Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus*, 263 n. 23.

³⁵The charge that penal substitution cannot account for transformation is often found hand-in-hand with the charge that penal substitution obscures the cosmological dimensions of salvation. For such arguments, see Vernon White, *Atonement and Incarnation: An Essay in Universalism and Particularity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 51-68, 87-106; Green, “Must We Imagine?,” 166-67; Smail, “Can One Man Die for the People?,” 73-92; Colin E. Gunton, *The Actuality of the Atonement: A Study of Metaphor, Rationality and the Christian Tradition* (New York: T&T Clark, 1988), 188-95. Gunton uses terms of judgment, substitution, etc. but denies “punitive or distributive justice” and sees the cross as a work of transformation rather than an “imposition of suffering” from the Father upon the Son in order to provide for the “breach of the universal order” (188).

end, then one must acknowledge that penal substitution fails to serve redemption in its fullest picture—a significant issue when proponents of penal substitution typically understand it as the foundational understanding of the atonement.

A second reason why this charge needs answering is simply because not enough attention has been given to illustrating the connection between penal substitutionary atonement and the redemption of the created order.³⁷ After surveying more than twenty evangelical systematic theologies, looking for the relationship between the cross and new creation, John Jefferson Davis concluded that “evangelical theologians generally do not see any connections between the atoning work of Christ and the future of the earth.”³⁸ Such an observation demands a response.

Finally, this charge against penal substitution needs to be addressed because lying behind the claim that penal substitution cannot account for new creation is the

³⁶Arguments to this end by opponents of penal substitution have already been noted above (see n. 32). For arguments outside of those already noted in this paper, see Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 274-87; N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 79-163; Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985); G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

³⁷In works defending penal substitution, this charge that penal substitution does not serve the purpose of bringing about the new creation often goes unaddressed. Thus, Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach do not address it in the section dealing with objections to penal substitution in *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 208-324. Additionally, Joel Green points to Schreiner's failure to deal with it in his chapter on penal substitution in looking at four views of the atonement (“Penal Substitution View,” 67-98). Green, “Kaleidoscopic Response,” 114-15.

Michael Ovey does address this charge in a chapter; see Michael Ovey, “The Cross, Creation and the Human Predicament,” in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 100-35. Likewise, Garry Williams devotes a paragraph to the challenge; see Garry J. Williams, “Penal Substitution: A Response to Recent Criticisms,” *JETS* 50 (2007): 82-83.

³⁸John Jefferson Davis, “Ecological ‘Blind Spots’ in the Structure and Content of Recent Evangelical Systematic Theologies,” *JETS* 43 (2000): 285. Though this is perhaps overstated, Davis's research is no doubt effective in revealing that more work needs to be done in order to demonstrate the connection between the atonement and new creation.

charge that the nature of penal substitution makes the resurrection of Christ pointless.

That is, if the atonement is viewed in terms of satisfying God's wrath, and if God's wrath is man's fundamental problem, then the resurrection becomes (at best) that which is disconnected from the cross or (at worst) something that is altogether unnecessary.³⁹

Pinnock has provided one example of this attack:

What seems to have happened is that Western theology has allowed itself to be dominated by a legalistic view of sin and a forensic model of atonement which leaves little room for resurrection.

When the atonement is thought of chiefly in terms of merit and the law, the cross becomes central, but the resurrection drops into the category of subjective redemption. A Latin idea of atonement does not have much room for resurrection which can go almost unmentioned because it is not required.⁴⁰

When one considers that Christ's resurrection is the inauguration of the new creation, it is easy to see that the charge that penal substitution makes Christ's resurrection unnecessary is a challenge directly in line with the charge that penal substitution cannot account for the restoration of the cosmos.

Thesis

The intent of this study is to answer the question: "If the purpose of God will be actualized in a restoration of all things, then how is this purpose served by a theory of

³⁹Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 148.

⁴⁰Clark H. Pinnock, "Salvation by Resurrection," *Ex Auditu* 9 (1993): 2. Gregory Boyd has also noted, "If the main problem needing to be addressed by Christ was that God's wrath needed to be appeased, and if the main solution to this problem consisted of God slaying his Son on the cross, one naturally wonders what could possibly be left to be done once this is completed." Gregory A. Boyd, "Christus Victor Response," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 99. For other charges that penal substitution makes the resurrection of Christ unnecessary or loosely connected to the cross, see Chalke, "The Redemption of the Cross," 39, Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 148; Smail, *Once for All*, 96; Fiddes, *Past and Present Salvation*, 100; Pinnock and Brow, *Unbounded Love*, 87.

penal substitutionary atonement?”⁴¹ Answering this will, thus, provide a response to this question while simultaneously refuting the charge that penal substitution fails to serve the purpose of God in restoring all things and “obscures the . . . cosmological dimensions of salvation.”⁴² Specifically, this study will argue that penal substitution is necessary for the renewal of creation because cosmic restoration is dependent upon the removal of condemnation from individuals and those same individuals receiving a verdict of justification—a verdict which is publicly demonstrated in their resurrection. In demonstrating this, this study will highlight not only the necessary legal nature of Christ’s atoning work but of his resurrection as well, showing that Christ’s resurrection serves to justify⁴³ believers, bring about their resurrection, and restore to them the full

⁴¹Green, “Must We Imagine?,” 166.

⁴²Green’s full quote also questions how penal substitution is not “an obstacle to a thoroughgoing soteriology oriented toward holiness of life” (ibid.). However, because of the scope and limitations of this study, I will not be able to interact fully with Green’s complete question concerning how penal substitution leads toward transformation in one’s character in this life and not just resurrection. In chap. 4, however, as I examine Paul’s argument in Rom 8:1-4, I will begin to answer this aspect of Green’s question. In short, the answer is that when the legal condemnation that underlies death’s reign is removed, there is consequently a transformation in behavior.

⁴³I understand justification to be forensic rather than transformative in nature. That is, for God to justify someone means that he declares them righteous rather than makes them righteous. For an argument concerning whether justification is forensic or transformative, see Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 63-71. In this work, Schreiner comes to the view that saving righteousness is transformative in nature, though he notes his difficulty in coming to this conclusion, writing, “I have changed my mind several times on this question, as anyone who has read my previous writing may discover! I have slowly become convinced, however, that transformation is involved.” Schreiner, *Romans*, 66 n. 11. Interestingly, Schreiner reflects a change in a later work. After arguing for a forensic understanding of God’s saving righteousness, Schreiner writes, “The above evidence has convinced many scholars that God’s saving righteousness is forensic and not transformative. In other words, God declares us righteous and does not make us righteous. . . . Some scholars argue, however, that God’s righteousness is both forensic and transformative, declaring us righteous and making us righteous. . . . Though I endorsed this view previously, I would argue that the forensic understanding is finally more convincing.” Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 205.

For arguments that justification is forensic in nature, see J. V. Fesko, *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 235-37; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 292-93; N. T. Wright, *Justification: God’s Plan & Paul’s Vision* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 86-92; Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ*, 203-09; idem, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying*

privileges of sonship whereupon the created order will be transformed.⁴⁴ Therefore, rather than attempting to show a mere connection between penal substitution and the restoration of the cosmos,⁴⁵ this study seeks to demonstrate that penal substitution is required if the created order is to be redeemed.⁴⁶

Methodology

This thesis will be demonstrated through biblical investigation and theological construction. Chapter 2 will investigate what went wrong with the created order. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate the nature of the fallen created order. This chapter will reveal that the problem with the created order requiring its need for redemption is not merely a process of corruption that needs to be undone but a corruption that has come through a word of condemnation pronounced on Adam in Genesis 3 that is now manifested in a reign of death. Additionally, this chapter will show that Adam's role in the created order is one of image-bearer and son of God. Showing that the problem

God in Christ (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 353-62. Although the above authors agree that justification is forensic in nature, some disagree over other aspects concerning justification. For an argument that justification is transformative, see Chris VanLandingham, *Judgment and Justification in Early Judaism and the Apostle Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 242-332.

⁴⁴In this I will interact with Joel Green's charge specifically since he has given more detail for what he perceives is the incompatibility between penal substitution and new creation. However, I will also note other opponents of penal substitution at points throughout this study whose views align with Green's and support what he contends.

⁴⁵This is necessary to note because when one is answering a charge, the ground rules of what one is trying to accomplish are required. Furthermore, Plantiga and Feinberg have both noted that a "defense" should be understood philosophically as merely suggesting that which can be possible, even if not plausible (Alvin Plantiga, *God, Freedom, and Evil* [New York: Harper & Row, 1974], 28; John S. Feinberg, *The Many Faces of Evil: Theological Systems and the Problems of Evil* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004], 29). My aim in this dissertation, however, is to do more than offer a possibility for how penal substitution might relate to the redemption of the cosmos. I intend to show the necessity of penal substitution for the redemption of the cosmos.

⁴⁶This statement of necessity should be understood to indicate "consequent necessity." That is, it is only once God freely decides to save a people, bringing them to glory and redeeming his creation, that penal substitutionary atonement is necessary.

with the created order is rooted in a word of divine judgment and condemnation pronounced upon God's son (Adam), it will be clear that the work of redemption must address this divine legal pronouncement and seek to restore God's sons to their rightful place over the created order. This will involve an examination of Romans 8:19-22 (which states most clearly creation's plight), the Fall in Genesis 3, the corruption of the land with Israel addressed in Deuteronomy 29:22-28 and Isaiah 24:1-20, and the connection between Adam's sin, condemnation, and death in Romans 5:12-21.⁴⁷

Chapter 3 will then demonstrate why this sentence of condemnation must be removed for the created order to be redeemed and why this removal of condemnation poses a problem in light of God's justice. This step will involve an examination of the meaning of concepts since there is disagreement between proponents and opponents of penal substitution concerning how notions such as righteousness/justice, judgment and wrath are to be understood. It will be argued that opponents of penal substitution understand these issues in a reductionistic manner that dismisses the notion of retributive justice and thus ignores the evidence of the biblical text. It will be further argued that God's righteousness, judgment, and wrath are to be understood in traditional categories, and that the notion of retributive justice is grounded in the Scripture. This chapter will then conclude by bringing the conclusions of chapters two and three together, highlighting the need for condemnation to be removed from guilty humans while noting the seeming impossibility of such an action in light of God's justice and righteousness.

⁴⁷The exegetical study of these chapters will not seek to be exhaustive but thorough enough to demonstrate the nature of the fallen created order is one rooted in a legal reality of condemnation that is manifested in the created order lying under the reign of death. Most of the space will be given to Rom 5:12-21, which shows the reign of death over the cosmos being rooted in man's sin and the consequent sentence of condemnation.

Chapter 4 will reveal the answer to this problem, showing that penal substitutionary atonement provides for the removal of condemnation that brought about the corruption⁴⁸ of the created order and is the teaching of Scripture. This will be demonstrated through a biblical-theological investigation of the nature of the atonement and an exegetical examination of Romans 3:21-26; 8:3, 2 Corinthians 5:21; and Galatians 3:13. These texts specifically will be examined because they have traditionally been understood to teach penal substitution and are acknowledged by opponents of penal substitution as those texts wherein Paul develops the “substitutionary nature of Christ’s death.”⁴⁹ This study will reveal the need for penal substitution in order that God’s justice might be upheld as he justifies sinners.

Chapter 5 will advance the argument by demonstrating that Jesus’ resurrection not only can be reconciled with penal substitutionary atonement but is the necessary consequence of penal substitution if the work of Christ is to serve as the basis for man’s justification before God. This chapter will not only serve as a defense against the charge that penal substitution makes Jesus’ resurrection unnecessary and unrelated to the atonement but will also show that the resurrection of Christ is itself a forensic act. Specifically this chapter will show that Jesus’ resurrection is his justification and was necessary since he had died bearing God’s condemnation for sinful man. It will be shown that this understanding of Jesus’ resurrection fits with the teaching of Scripture

⁴⁸References to the fallen nature of the created order will vary throughout this study. “Corruption” is intended to communicate Paul’s articulation that creation is in bondage to φθορά in Rom 8:21.

⁴⁹See, for example, Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 63.

(e.g., Rom 4:25, 1 Tim 3:16, and 1 Cor 15:17-18) and is the necessary conclusion of Paul's argument in Romans 5:12-19.

This chapter will conclude by illustrating the connection between believers' justification and their resurrection, arguing that the latter is the necessary consequence of the former. Furthermore, this chapter will show that as believers' justification is eschatologically demonstrated in the resurrection, this will signal the restoration of the full privileges of sonship, whereupon the created order will be freed from its bondage to decay and share in the freedom of the glory of the sons of God (Rom 8:12-30).

Finally, chapter 6 will conclude the dissertation. Here, the study will summarize the observations throughout and reveal that those elements which supposedly make penal substitution incompatible with the redemption of the created order (e.g., the focus on a forensic judgment, individuals, and the verdict of justification) are the very elements necessary for the redemption of the created order. This concluding chapter will also note an area of further study in light of these conclusions. Finally, the study will end with a brief note concerning the hopes for this work that seeks to answer the question, "What does the justification of individuals in the courtroom have to do with the transformation of the created order?"

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE CREATED ORDER?

Introduction

Discovering a solution requires that one first diagnose the problem.¹

Therefore, any attempt to determine what is necessary to restore the created order demands that one first discover what is wrong with creation. Why is it in need of being restored? Though there may be disagreement concerning the nature of the disease among those who prescribe different remedies for creation's plight, there *is* agreement that creation needs to be restored. There is also strong consensus that creation's dilemma is referenced in Romans 8:19-22.² Therefore, this chapter will begin with an examination of this crucial Pauline text.

¹Ovey rightly notes, "The nature of the disease determines the nature of the remedy." Michael Ovey, "The Cross, Creation and the Human Predicament," in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 100-35. See also Carson's comments, D. A. Carson, "The Wrath of God," in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 49.

²Stephen H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought*, 2nd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 106; Gregory A. Boyd, "Christus Victor View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 35; N. T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 595-97; James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, WBC, vol. 38a (Dallas: Word Books, 1988), 469-73; G. W. H. Lampe, "The New Testament Doctrine of *Ktisis*," *SJT* 17 (1964): 449-62; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 410-17; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 513-18; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 432-40; Edward Adams, *Constructing the World: A Study in Paul's Cosmological Language* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2000), 174-84; Harry Alan Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation: Nature in Romans 8.19-22 and Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*, LNTS, vol. 336 (New York: T&T Clark, 2006), 14-34; Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 97-135; Laurie J. Braaten, "All Creation Groans: Romans 8:22 in Light of the Biblical

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Romans 8:19-22 falls within a larger section (vv. 18-30) in which Paul encourages believers with the hope of coming glory amidst their suffering in the present.³ The section as a whole is bracketed by references to “glory,”⁴ as Paul begins by noting that the suffering of the present time is not worth comparing to the future “glory that is to be revealed” (v. 18) and ends with a word of assurance that all those whom God has foreknown, predestined, called, and justified will be glorified (v. 30).⁵ Therefore, Paul lays out a picture of the glorious hope that awaits all of those who (“in Christ Jesus”) no longer bear condemnation⁶ before God (v. 1).⁷ The text does not merely speak of this

Sources,” *HBT* 28 (2006). Aside from Rom 8:19-22, no other NT text speaks directly to the corruption of the created order.

³Brendan Byrne, S. J., *Romans*, SP (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 254-62; Edward Adams, “Paul’s Story of God and Creation: The Story of How God Fulfills His Purposes in Creation,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 28-29; Schreiner, *Romans*, 432-33; Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 171; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 148-79; Moo, *Romans*, 508-10.

⁴That the references to “glory” form a bracket for this section, see Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 506-08; Schreiner, *Romans*, 454-55. Moo suggests that though the term itself is only mentioned three times in these verses, it is the overarching theme of the text. Moo, *Romans*, 508.

⁵Though glorification is a future reality that will not take place in this present life, Paul writes of the glorification of believers in the aorist (ἐδόξασεν), denoting its certainty. So Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 485-86; Schreiner, *Romans*, 454; John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 321; Moo, *Romans*, 535-36; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:433.

⁶I mention that these individuals are “no longer” condemned because Paul argues in 1:1-3:20 that all (Jews and Greek) stand condemned before God and are unable to be justified in God’s sight through the works of the law.

⁷It is worth noting that this chapter begins with clearly forensic language. Paul announces in v. 1 that those in Christ are no longer condemned, for they have been set free by the law of sin and death (v. 2). Furthermore, he notes that Christ’s work was to the end that sin might be condemned in his flesh and that the “righteous requirement of the law” might be fulfilled in believers (vv. 3-4). Thus, in this chapter that discusses most clearly the coming redemption and restoration of the created order, it begins with a focus on the legal standing of those individuals who are in Christ Jesus before God, made possible through the work of Christ.

future glory as some amorphous notion, however, but describes believers' hope as that time when they will be conformed to the image of Christ (v. 29), their bodies will be redeemed (v. 23), and their adoption as sons will be clearly revealed (vv. 19, 23).

The text itself sustains an anthropocentric focus throughout,⁸ where each piece of the argument supplies greater encouragement for believers. However, this does not mean that mankind is the only focus of redemption in these verses. Rather, Paul mentions that “creation [κτίσεως] waits with eager longing” to be “set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (vv. 19, 21). But to what exactly is Paul referring when he mentions that “the creation” (τῆς κτίσεως) is longing to be set free from its bondage to decay?

The history of interpretation concerning the reference for κτίσις has been well documented, with suggestions that it refers to all of creation (animate and inanimate), believers, unbelievers, or even angels.⁹ The notion that this text refers to angels should be quickly dismissed because angelic beings never appear in this text or in its surrounding context. The view that κτίσις refers to believers should also be rejected in light of the fact that κτίσις is contrasted with believers throughout the text (vv. 19, 21-23). Further, the view that κτίσις refers to unbelievers should also be dismissed, because though the suggestion rightly recognizes the contrast of κτίσις and the children of God

⁸Schreiner rightly notes, “The focus is not finally on the transformation of the created world, although that is included, but the future redemption that awaits God’s children.” Schreiner, *Romans*, 437. Thus, he highlights the false dichotomy put forth by Green in charging that a focus on individuals entails diversion from the created order.

⁹For a history of interpretation concerning the reference for κτίσις, see Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 177-81; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:411-12. Jonathan Moo notes that there have been at least ten proposals made for the meaning of κτίσις in this text and that the debates stretches back into the patristic era. Jonathan Moo, “Romans 8:19-22 and Isaiah’s Cosmic Covenant,” *NTS* 54 (2008): 75.

throughout the text and that κτίσις is said to display human characteristics (such as waiting and “groaning” (vv. 19, 22)), it fails to recognize Paul’s teaching of judgment throughout Romans. Throughout the chapters leading up to this text, Paul argues that those who are not in Christ will not obtain the “freedom of the glory of the children of God” but will bear God’s judgment “on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (2:5). Thus, it is impossible to imagine that unbelievers are longing for the day when God’s sons will be revealed, for that day will not spell freedom for unbelievers but is the appointed time when the Lord “will render to each one according to his works” (2:6). For these reasons, most commentators agree that κτίσις is a reference to the nonhuman creation, which is personified in these verses.¹⁰ Therefore, Paul argues in this text that it is not just believers who await redemption but that the created order itself will be redeemed on the day when the sons of God are revealed and their bodies redeemed (vv. 19, 21, 23).

Paul’s reference to creation’s redemption in this text should not be surprising. In 8:17, he had noted that if believers have received the Spirit, then they are children of God, and if they are children then there are heirs—“heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.” The mention of inheritance recalls the Abrahamic covenant wherein God

¹⁰C. E. B. Cranfield, “Some Observations on Romans 8:19-21,” in *Reconciliation and Hope: New Testament Essays on Atonement and Eschatology*, ed. Robert Banks (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 225; idem, *Romans*, 1:411-12; Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 177-81; Moo, *Romans*, 514; Schreiner, *Romans*, 435; Jewett, *Romans*, 511; Moo, “Romans 8.19-22 and Isaiah’s Cosmic Covenant,” 75-77; David M. Russell, *The “New Heavens and New Earth”: Hope for the Creation in Jewish Apocalyptic and the New Testament*, SBAL, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Visionary, 1996), 161; Byrne, *Romans*, 256; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 469-70; Murray, *Romans*, 302; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB, vol. 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 506; Adams, “Paul’s Story of God and Creation,” 28-29; idem, *Constructing the World*, 175-77; John R. W. Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 238; Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), 424.

promised that Abraham's offspring would inherit the Promised Land (Gen 12:7; 13:14-15; 17:8). Yet, thus far in Romans, Paul has not mentioned Canaan as an inheritance for believers. Rather, the only occasion in the letter where the κληρονόμος word-group appears is in 4:13,¹¹ where Paul describes the promise to Abraham and his offspring in terms of inheriting not just Canaan but the entire world (τὸ κληρονόμου αὐτὸν εἶναι κόσμου).¹² It is natural, then, to anticipate that in the midst of encouraging believers with the hope of coming glory that Paul would make reference to their inheritance, and this is precisely what he does.¹³ Beginning in 8:19 and extending through 8:21, Paul notes that the "creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God . . . in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God." Therefore, the created order itself is longing to obtain the freedom that believers will know when they are raised to eternal life, and it

¹¹James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1992), 248; Braaten, "All Creation Groans," 156.

¹²Explaining the nature of Paul's argument in Rom 4:13, Dunn notes, "Paul takes up the enlarged form of the promise, of course, not because it implies Israel's worldwide dominance, but presumably because it sets the narrower strand of salvation-history centering on Israel within the larger scheme of the creation: the blessings promised to Abraham and his seed . . . is the restoration of God's created order, of man to his Adamic status as steward of the rest of God's creation." Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 213. For further discussion concerning the development of the promise of land to that of the entire world, see O. Palmer Robertson, "A New Covenant Perspective on the Land," in *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 121-41; P. W. L. Walker, *Jesus and the Holy City: New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT, vol. 15 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003); Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 512-87; G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004); David E. Holwerda, *Jesus & Israel: One Covenant or Two?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 85-112; J. Gary Millar, "Land," in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 623-27.

¹³Braaten rightly notes, "In Rom 4:13 he says that by the righteousness of faith (through Christ), the promise to Abraham and his seed is to be 'heirs of the world.' If this is what Paul means by '[God's] heirs' in Rom 8:17, it would explain the transition from a discussion of God's family to the creation: creation, indeed, is included in the family estate." Braaten, "All Creation Groans," 156.

will indeed know that freedom according to this text. But from what exactly is creation longing to be set free? What does it mean that creation is in bondage to decay?

Answering these questions lies at the heart of the current chapter. It is helpful to note that aids for the reader are not limited to the mere reference that creation is presently in “bondage to decay” in 8:21. Paul also notes in verse 20 that “the creation was subjected to futility.” Thus, one may confidently assert that creation was “subjected to futility” so that it is now in “bondage to decay.” Yet these terms do not necessarily provide an answer to the nature of creation’s plight as the text does not seem to provide much in way of describing the nature of “decay” (φθορᾶς) and “futility” (ματαιότητι). Further, ματαιότης is not a common word in the New Testament, as Moo has noted that it is found outside of this text only in Ephesians 4:17 and 2 Peter 2:18.¹⁴ Most scholars conclude that it denotes a frustration rooted in an inability to fulfill the purpose for which it was created.¹⁵ Concerning the meaning of φθορᾶς, the genitive has been taken numerous ways,¹⁶ but most explanations are similar to that of Hahne who notes that creation is in bondage to death and decay, with no power to free itself.¹⁷ But these

¹⁴Moo, *Romans*, 515 n. 36.

¹⁵Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:413; Byrne, *Romans*, 258; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 507; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 470; Schreiner, *Romans*, 436; Moo, *Romans*, 515; Murray, *Romans*, 303; Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 189; Russell, *The “New Heavens and New Earth,”* 168; Adams, *Constructing the World*, 178; Moo, “Romans 8.19-22 and Isaiah’s Cosmic Covenant,” 81.

¹⁶Those taking it as an appositional genitive include, Murray, *Romans*, 304; Schreiner, *Romans*, 436; as subjective, Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:415; as objective, Moo, *Romans*, 517 n. 47; Byrne, *Romans*, 261.

¹⁷Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 195. Similarly, Schreiner, *Romans*, 436; Murray, *Romans*, 304; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:415; Byrne, *Romans*, 257; Käsemann sees this as denoting creation’s subjection to the “rule of death.” Käsemann, *Romans*, 235; as does Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 509; similarly Moo speaks of “decay” ruling this world after the fall. Moo, *Romans*, 517.

notions alone do not provide sufficient help in determining the precise nature of creation's plight.

What *is* quite helpful in determining the nature of creation's dilemma is the recognition that Adamic language appears throughout the text. Dunn has rightly noted that the text is dominated with an Adam motif where the "cosmic outworking of salvation [is pictured] in strong Adam terms."¹⁸ Biblical concepts which are linked with Adam such as image-bearing, sonship, glory, and the created order going the way of its inhabitants all recall the scene which unfolds in the early chapters of Genesis. In light of this Adamic context, then, there is vast agreement that when Paul speaks of creation being subjected to futility, he is referring to the events of Genesis 3:17-19.¹⁹ Therefore, an attempt to discern more precisely the nature of creation's plight as articulated in Romans 8:19-22 requires that one consider the events of the earliest chapters in the biblical storyline.

¹⁸Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 467. Those explicitly noting an Adam motif throughout this text also include J. R. Daniel Kirk, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 139-49; Adams, "Paul's Story of God and Creation," 28-29; Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 98-104; Russell, *The "New Heavens and New Earth,"* 162.

¹⁹Of Rom 8:20-21, Murray writes, "In relation to this earth this is surely Paul's commentary on Gen. 3:17, 18." Murray, *Romans*, 303; see also Cranfield, "Some Observations on Romans 8:19-21," 226; idem, *Romans*, 1:413; Moo, *Romans*, 516; Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 103; James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 100; Byrne, *Romans*, 257; Stott, *Romans*, 239-41; Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 195; Russell, *The "New Heavens and New Earth,"* 162, 168; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 505; C. Clifton Black II, "Pauline Perspectives on Death in Romans 5-8," *JBL* 103, no. 3 (1984): 428. Braaten argues that these verses are a reference to a consistent pattern of creation suffering due to human sin and guilt seen throughout the prophets. Braaten, "All Creation Groans." Moo, however, argues that Braaten mistakenly "sets the prophetic background over and against the possibility that Paul has in view Genesis 3 and the fall of Adam." Recognizing the recurrence of this theme throughout the prophetic literature, Moo suggests that "though Paul indeed links the subjection of creation back to Adam, he interprets this narrative in such a way that the effects of the subjection of creation continue to be worked out in the context of a dynamic and ongoing relationship between God, Adamic humanity, and the rest of creation," and he especially sees the language and concepts of Isaiah 24-27 utilized in this text. Moo, "Romans 8:19-22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant," 78-84 (esp. 84).

Adam – In God’s Image, as God’s Son

The early chapters of Genesis reveal many of the themes that Paul notes at the point of creation’s redemption in Romans 8:12-30, namely, image-bearing, glory, sonship, and the creation going the way of its ruler. It is, therefore, no stretch to suggest that the connection between mankind and the created order is found in these chapters. Nor should it be surprising to find here a connection between the forensic judgment of individuals and the corruption of the created order.²⁰ Before seeing the details of this connection, however, one must recognize the relationship of humanity and the created order, which involves understanding Adam’s role as the divine image-bearer and son of God.

Adam as Image-Bearer and Ruler of the Created Order

When Adam was created, he was placed in the garden not as an equal to the rest of creation but as one who was over it, created in God’s image. In Genesis 1:26-28, the text reads,

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

²⁰Again, Green’s charge is that it is difficult to imagine the connection between a forensic judgment which focuses on individuals and the transformation of the entire cosmos. Joel B. Green, “Must We Imagine the Atonement in Penal Substitutionary Terms? Questions, Caveats, and a Plea,” in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 166.

Therefore, man was created as God's image-bearer.²¹ But what does it mean that man bears the divine image?

There is vast agreement that image-bearing entails²² the idea that man was to be God's representative on the earth, God's vice-regent²³ or "servant-king" who would "mediate God's rule to the creation."²⁴ Clines notes, "According to Genesis 1:26f. man is set on earth in order to be the representative there of the absent God who is nevertheless present by His image."²⁵ To those who were his representatives on the earth, then, God gave "dominion over the works of [his] hands" and "put all things under his feet" (Ps 8:6).²⁶ God's rule on earth was, thus, carried out through the agency of mankind, as man

²¹Of course, the man and the woman were divine image-bearers; therefore, "man" in this sentence is intended to indicate mankind. However, I will continue to focus on Adam since the New Testament focuses on the consequences of his actions instead of Eve's. See, for example, Rom 5:12-21 and 1 Cor 15:22.

²²I use "entails" intentionally here because there is not clear consensus on what the *imago Dei* is versus what it entails. Therefore, those who define the *imago Dei* along certain categories and those who note that those categories are mere entailments of the *imago Dei* can agree that at minimum the *imago Dei* entails certain realities explored in these pages.

²³For those understanding that being created in God's image means that humans, as representatives of God, were to be his vice-regents, see Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 66, 80-81; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 58; Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 98; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Children of the Living God* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1989), 7; Dan G. McCartney, "Ecce Homo: The Coming of the Kingdom as the Restoration of Human Vicegerency," *WTJ* 56 (1994): 1-21; Kenneth A. Mathews *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 164; Walter Brueggemann, *Genesis* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1982), 32; D. J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *TynBul* 19 (1968): 53-103; Byrne, *Romans*, 257; Russell, *The "New Heavens and New Earth,"* 43; J. Mark Lawson, "Romans 8:18-25—The Hope of Creation," *RevExp* 91, no. 4 (1994): 560.

²⁴Peter J. Gentry, "Kingdom through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image," *SBJT* 12, no. 1 (2008): 32.

²⁵Clines, "The Image of God in Man," 88.

²⁶Gentry notes, "Palm 8, attributed to David, in vv. 5-8, constitutes a word-by-word commentary and meditation on Gen 1:26-28." Gentry, "Kingdom through Covenant," 23. Similarly, see Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 84; Meredith G. Kline, *Images of the Spirit* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1998), 26-28; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 86; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 217.

exercised dominion over the created order, and the earth was his to rule, fill, and subdue (Gen 1:28).²⁷

Additionally, Psalm 8 notes that man was endowed with glory.²⁸ In this psalm, which expositis the early chapters of Genesis,²⁹ the psalmist wonders what is man that God is mindful of him in the midst of a creation seemingly much more glorious—amidst the heavens above in which God had “set [his] glory” (Ps 8:1). Surprisingly, the psalmist answers, “Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet” (Ps 8:5-6). Thus, instead of viewing man as inferior to the creation in which God had set his glory, the psalmist sees man as a royal figure and notes that God had “crowned” (עטר)³⁰ him with glory—a glory manifest

²⁷The importance of the earth over which man reigns should not be missed here. Dempster notes well, “For human beings to function as the image of God they need a territory, a domain to rule over. And to have the land without human beings is also pointless, for the kingdom needs a king, the dominion a dynasty.” Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 62. Clines also rightly notes, “Man is thus not simply master of the animals, but king of the earth.” Clines, “The Image of God in Man,” 99.

²⁸The connection between the divine image and glory is not as common as the connection between the divine image and notions of representing God, ruling, or reflecting God in one’s own righteousness. However, this connection is made at a few points throughout the Scriptures. As noted earlier in this chapter, these two realities come together in Rom 8:18-30. There, Paul frames his argument with the mention of “the glory to be revealed” and being “glorified” while at the same time focusing the believer’s end in being “conformed to the image of [the] Son.” Additionally, in 1 Cor 11:7, Paul writes, “For a man . . . is the image and glory of God.” Then, in 2 Cor 3:18 Paul notes that believers, in “beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.” Therefore, when one combines the notion of sonship with image (as will be shown below), the connection with the theme of glory is even stronger, even as Jesus’ task is stated in terms of “bringing many sons to glory” in Heb 2:10. Mathews (*Genesis 1-11:26*, 164) rightly notes, “In the New Testament these ideas of image, glory, and sonship are found closely related (e.g., 1 Cor 11:7; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4,6; Heb 2:5-10).” He then adds, “Paul closely links ‘image’ and ‘glory.’ . . . This association is most likely derived from Psalm 8’s commentary on Genesis 1” (171).

²⁹Clines, “The Image of God in Man,” 95; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 171; Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 23; Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 84

³⁰“Crowned” is most likely not used here by the psalmist loosely but intentionally as an indicator of man’s royal status as one created in God’s image. So Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 29; McCartney, “*Ecce Homo*,” 4; Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 31.

in man's right rule over the created order.³¹

Also, inherent within man's creation in God's image is the expectation that man would obey God. In noting the importance of the ancient Near Eastern understanding of bearing the divine image, Gentry writes,

The ancient Near Eastern and Canaanite cultural context is significant. In Egypt, from at least 1650 B.C. onwards, people perceived the king as the image of god because he was the son of god. . . . What is stressed is that the behavior of the king reflects the behavior of the god. The king as the image of god reflects the characteristics and essential notions of the god.³²

Therefore, as one who was to represent God as his vice-regent, man must not only exercise dominion over the created order, thus reflecting the glory with which he was endowed by his Maker, but he must also reflect God's behavior and righteousness.³³

The early chapters of Genesis, therefore, reveal a picture in which Adam is created in God's image, as God's representative, ruling and exercising dominion over the created order, and manifesting a glory in his wise rule and obedience to God. Yet Adam's relationship to God cannot be limited to this. As Gentry has noted, one was

³¹For argument that man's glory was to be demonstrated in his wise rule over creation, see Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 84-101; Adams, "Paul's Story of God and Creation," 26; Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 26-32; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 81-86; Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 108-09; Gentry, "Kingdom Through Covenant," 29; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 170. Conversely, Garlington notes that "humanity's shortfall of the 'glory' of God is its failure to be the adequate image of God." Don Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1994), 89. In Jewish traditional interpretation, Adam was understood to possess a glory that was lost or distorted after the fall, so Scroggs, *The Last Adam*, 98-99; Adams, "Paul's Story," 26; Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 111.

³²Peter J. Gentry, "Rethinking the 'Sure Mercies of David' in Isaiah 55:3," *WTJ* 69, no. 2 (2007): 284. See also Russell, *The "New Heavens and the New Earth"*, 44.

³³David B. Garner, "The First and Last Son: Christology and Sonship in Pauline Soteriology," in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church*, ed. Lane G. Tipton and Jeffrey C. Waddington (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 261; Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Overland Park, KS: Two Age, 2000), 62; idem, *Images of the Spirit*, 31; Brendan Byrne, S. J., *'Sons of God' – 'Seed of Abraham': A Study of the Idea of Sonship of God of all Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 18.

perceived to be the “the image of god because he was the son of god.”³⁴

Adam as God’s Son

The connection between image and sonship is present in the opening chapters of Genesis. After declaring that God created Adam in his own image and likeness, Moses writes, “When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth” (Gen 5:3). Here appears the first connection between the categories of “son” and “image” and “likeness.” Is the author, then, attempting to show a strong similarity between divine image-bearing and sonship?

Ferguson concludes that he is:

To be a son, in the language of Genesis, was to be made in the image and likeness of one’s father. So, when Seth was born to Adam and Eve, the event is recorded in these terms. . . . Exactly the same phrase is used about the relationship between God and Adam. God made man in his *image* and *likeness* (*Gen. 1:26-27; 5:1-2*).

To be a son, and to be the image and likeness of your father, are synonymous ideas. To put it another way, if we wish to understand what man was intended to be, we need to think of him as a son of God. If, in turn, we ask what it means to be a son of God, the answer must be found in terms of being God’s image and likeness.³⁵

Nor is Ferguson alone in this conclusion. Multiple scholars have noted that sonship and image are “mutually explanatory concepts.”³⁶

Therefore, Adam is not simply created in God’s image. He is to God as Seth is to him—he is God’s son. The New Testament confirms this conclusion in Luke 3:38. In

³⁴Gentry, “Rethinking the ‘Sure Mercies of David’ in Isaiah 55:3,” 284.

³⁵Ferguson, *Children of the Living God*, 6 (emphasis in original).

³⁶Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 46. See also, Garner, “The First and Last Son,” 260; Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 142-49; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 58; Kline, *Images of the Spirit*, 23; McCartney, “*Ecce Homo*,” 3; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 164, 170. Gentry notes, “To sum up, the term ‘the image of god’ in the culture and language of the ancient Near East in the fifteenth century B. C. would have communicated two main ideas: (1) rulership and (2) sonship.” Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 27.

Luke 3:23, Luke begins the genealogy of Jesus, tracing his line all the way back to Adam. The pattern is not a surprising one. Each individual is identified in relationship to his father. Thus, Joseph is identified as “the son of Heli” and Heli as “the son of Matthat” (Luke 3:23-24), and so the pattern continues until the line culminates in the naming of the first man, “Adam.” However, the pattern does not stop without providing identification for Adam as well, as Luke declares that Adam is “the son of God” (Luke 3:38). Thus, in line with that which is seen in Genesis 5:3, Luke interprets “‘likeness of God’ in Genesis . . . to indicate that Adam is the son of God.”³⁷

Therefore, in Genesis 1-2, one sees the creation of the first man, Adam, who is not simply on par with the rest of creation. Rather, he is created to rule over all of creation, exercising dominion over the earth and all therein as God’s image-bearer, vice-regent, and son, crowned with glory and honor—all themes which Romans 8:12-30 confirms will be present again when the earth is redeemed. It is in this setting and with this understanding of mankind that the creation falls under the divine curse.

Adam’s Sin and the Corruption of Creation

Though Genesis 1-2 paints a scene of paradise, there was a threat to Adam’s peaceful reign. In Genesis 2:17, God declared that Adam must not eat of the tree of the

³⁷Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 29. For similar claims about Luke’s intention, see Kline, *Kingdom Prologue*, 45; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 172-74; Ferguson, *Children of the Living God*, 6; Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 142-43; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 359-60; John Nolland, *Luke 1-9:20*, WBC, vol. 35A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989), 173-74; Deborah F. Sawyer, “The New Adam in the Theology of St Paul,” in *A Walk in the Garden: Biblical, Iconographical and Literary Images of Eden*, JSOTSup, vol. 136, ed. Paul Morris and Deborah Sawyer (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 111 n. 11. Kirk adds that “the sonship interpretation made by Luke is all the more significant because this portion of his genealogy of Jesus is apparently taken from Genesis 5.” Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 142. Marshall accordingly notes that Luke utilizes Genesis 5 in forming his genealogy. I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 165.

knowledge of good and evil, noting, “for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” Yet Genesis 3 records Adam defying the Lord’s prohibition, eating of the tree God had forbidden, and bringing ruin to all of creation. As God addresses the serpent, woman, and man for what had transpired, he pronounces curses. It is here one finds the source for what went wrong with creation. The text reads,

And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth from you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return” (Gen 3:17-19).

One sin from Adam and one pronouncement from God thereafter result in the ground over which Adam was to rule as God’s son and image-bearer now bringing difficulty to his labors and one day housing his dead body.³⁸ The creation God once had declared “good” he had now cursed. Therefore, the beautiful picture of God ruling over the creation through Adam is absent after Genesis 3. Russell Moore vividly notes the result of the curse:

The curse that comes about as a result of the Adamic fall is . . . cosmic in its extent—resulting in a disruption of the natural order, a degradation of the animal creation, a frustration of human labor, spiritual alienation from God, a conflict between the human and demonic realms, disharmony between the sexes, and a bloody reign of death extending eastward from Eden.³⁹

After the Fall God’s creation is no longer subject to God’s human mediator but is in bondage to the rule of death.⁴⁰

³⁸Waltke vividly writes, “The man’s natural relationship to the ground—to rule over it—is reversed; instead of submitting to him, it resists and eventually swallows him.” Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 95.

³⁹Russell D. Moore, “Personal and Cosmic Eschatology,” in *A Theology for the Church*, ed. Daniel L. Akin (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2007), 859.

Uncovering the plight of creation, therefore, necessarily involves an investigation of this curse after which creation was in need of being redeemed. Such an investigation reveals a few aspects of the curse that are key in understanding how the legal nature of Christ's death and resurrection is necessary for the redemption of the created order. The first of these is not a source of great debate, namely, that creation was cursed because of Adam's sin. It is while addressing Adam specifically that the Lord declares, "cursed is the ground," and lest the connection is missed, God adds, "because of *you*" (Gen 3:17).⁴¹ Moreover, the entire context of Genesis 3:17-19, in which God approaches the serpent, woman, and man, pronouncing curses because of their actions, leaves the reader no doubt that the curse comes because of Adam's specific sin of eating from the tree which God had prohibited (Gen 2:17). One immediate observation that should be made, then, is that the curse that comes upon the ground⁴² comes as a

⁴⁰Paul writes in Rom 5:14, "Death reigned from Adam to Moses." Similarly, he speaks of Jesus' resurrection giving evidence that "death no longer has *dominion* over him" (Rom 6:9). The picture of death as an enemy authority or power is also pictured by Paul in 1 Cor 15:24-26: "Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death." Therefore, death is portrayed in Scripture in a category much different than that in which it is most commonly understood today – as the simple expiration of the body. It is an enemy that Paul personifies as "reigning" and having "dominion." For this reason, throughout this study, images of death reigning or ruling as an enemy are not driven by an attempt to be poetic or artistic in my writing. Rather, they reflect an attempt to reflect accurately the language, concepts, and imagery of the Scripture, especially Paul's writings. For death as a tyrannical intruding ruler over creation, see Black, "Pauline Perspectives on Death in Romans 5-8," 413-33; Nils A. Dahl, "Two Notes on Romans 5," *ST* 5, no.1 (1951): 47; Schreiner, *Romans*, 286; Moore, "Personal and Cosmic Eschatology," 859; Byrne, *Romans*, 175-76; Dunn, *Romans* 1-8, 281; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 412.

⁴¹All emphases within Scripture quotations are added. "Emphasis on the second person 'you' and 'your' sharpens God's focus on the man's individual fault." Mathews, *Genesis 1:1-11:26*, 252.

⁴² There is debate concerning the nature of the Lord's curse in relation to the ground – whether man's ability to manage the ground or the ground itself is the object of the curse. Thus, Dumbrell has suggested, "What is impaired as a result of the Fall is human control of the ground, not the ground itself. . . . That is, the ground yields a curse because of what will be inappropriate control of the ground in the future, inasmuch as the problem after the Fall is human inability to use the ground rightly." William J. Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1-17: A Foreshadowing of the New Creation," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect &*

consequence of Adam's sin.⁴³

Second, it is also apparent that the curse comes upon the created order as a result of God's pronouncement in Genesis 3:17. That is, the creation's "bondage to decay" (Rom 8:21) was not a natural, unfolding consequence stemming from Adam's sin like a tree falling to the ground is the natural consequence of severing it at the base of its trunk.⁴⁴ Rather, the "world experienced corruption . . . by the condemnation of God for

Prospect, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 64. And Dumbrell is not alone in this conclusion; see also Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity, 1984), 183-84; John J. Bimson, "Reconsidering a 'Cosmic Fall,'" *SCB* 18, no. 1 (2006): 63-81; Lampe, "The New Testament Doctrine of *Ktisis*," 457. This argument sees the curse affecting the ground as a consequence of Adam's mismanagement. Thus, were Adam able to manage the earth well, exercising his dominion in a manner intended by the Lord, it would not bring forth thorns and thistles. However, because man is unable to exercise his dominion well, the earth itself brings forth thorns and thistles. Therefore, nothing in the nature of the created order has changed except for man's ability to manage it well.

Nelson, however, correctly suggests that this argument overlooks the biblical teaching that the earth needs to be made new (Isa 65:17-25; Ps 102:25-26; Rev 21:1-22:5), something that would seem unnecessary were the earth itself unaltered in its nature after the curse and remained "very good." P. G. Nelson, "The Curse: Relational or Cosmic?" *SCB* 19, no. 1 (2007): 77-78. Additionally, though Dumbrell notes that אַרְוֶהָ הָאֲדָמָה בְּעִבּוֹרְךָ ("cursed is the ground because of you") may be understood as indicating that the ground is cursed because of man's future "inappropriate control of the ground" (Dumbrell, "Genesis 2:1-17," 64), this hardly seems to be a natural way of reading בְּעִבּוֹרְךָ ("because of you"). Rather, בְּעִבּוֹרְךָ seems best understood with reference to Adam's past sin, not future activity (i.e., his future inability to control the ground). That is, as God tells Adam that the ground is cursed "because of you," this is most naturally understood as providing a basis for the curse in Adam's past sin (his eating of the tree) not as providing a basis in his future actions (as he will demonstrate his inability to control the ground). To understand בְּעִבּוֹרְךָ as a reference to Adam's future activity reverses the basis for the curse already established in the beginning of the verse, as v. 17 begins with God declaring, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree." For those agreeing that the ground itself was cursed in addition to Nelson (above), see Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 252-54; F. F. Bruce, "The Bible and the Environment," in *The Living and Active Word of God: Studies in Honor of Samuel J. Schultz*, ed. Morris Inch and Ronald Youngblood (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 15-29; John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of Genesis*, vol. 1 of *Calvin's Commentaries*, ed. and trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 172-75; Russell, *The "New Heavens and New Earth,"* 47-48.

⁴³Though this is not necessarily a disputed point, it is an important piece in the discovery of what went wrong and has been clearly noted by several authors, including Byrne, *Romans*, 256; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:414; Schreiner, *Romans*, 436; Moo, *Romans*, 516; Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, *An Old Testament Theology: A Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 267; William Dyrness, "Stewardship of the Earth in the Old Testament," in *Tending the Garden: Essays on the Gospel and the Earth*, ed. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 55; Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 252.

the sin of Adam.”⁴⁵ To curse the ground was no small matter, since to invoke a curse is equivalent to pronouncing the Lord’s condemning judgment.⁴⁶ Because of this, though someone might utter a curse upon another,⁴⁷ the one pronouncing the curse would fully recognize that only God could impose the malediction.⁴⁸ What is striking in this context is that God himself is the one who pronounces the curse.⁴⁹ Thus, the ground is in bondage to corruption not because of some natural process but because of a judicial pronouncement in which God himself declared to Adam, “Cursed is the ground because of you.”

This conclusion is further substantiated in light of Romans 8:20-21 where Paul notes that the creation was “subjected to futility, not willingly but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption.” Therefore, though the creation was subjected to futility, it was done with an eye to the day when it might “obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God”

⁴⁴Gathercole writes of the created order’s bondage to corruption, “And this δουλεία τῆς φθόρας is, as Paul makes clear, not something that arises naturally out of the created order, but is a divine act of judgment.” Simon J. Gathercole, “Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3:21-4:25,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 176. Similarly, Hahne notes, “The curse on the ground is not a natural consequence of Adam’s disobedience, nor was it something Adam directly caused. Rather it was God’s judicial response to Adam’s sin.” Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 188. See also Ovey, “The Cross, Creation, and the Human Predicament,” 112; Garry J. Williams, “The Cross and the Punishment of Sin,” in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 87-94; Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 83.

⁴⁵Mathews, *Genesis 1:1-11:26*, 253. By “world” in this quote, Mathews is referring to the non-human portion of the created order.

⁴⁶Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC, vol. 1 (Dallas: Word Books, 1987), 78.

⁴⁷E.g., Num 23:7; Josh 6:26; Judg 21:18; 1 Sam 14:24, 28; Matt 26:74; Jas 3:9-10.

⁴⁸Mathews, *Genesis 1:1-11:26*, 244.

⁴⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 78.

(8:21). When one considers the options, then, for who could have subjected the creation to futility,⁵⁰ it is clear that the reference can only be God since he alone could be said to have subjected the creation ἐφ' ἐλπίδι.⁵¹ Therefore, Paul deems the one who subjected the creation to futility to be God himself, and further confirms the corruption of the created order to be the consequence of God's pronouncement in Genesis 3:17 upon Adam's sin.⁵²

Third, the curse upon the ground comes in fulfillment of the word God had given in Genesis 2:17. God had declared to Adam that the day he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would die. Thus, the narrative is set up so that the reader necessarily anticipates this threat being fulfilled at the point at which Adam eats of the fruit.⁵³ Athanasius has rightly observed, "It would . . . have been unthinkable that God

⁵⁰The view of the vast majority of commentators is that the referent is God. These include Braaten, "All Creation Groans," 133; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 471; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:414; Stott, *Romans*, 239-41; C. K. Barrett, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2nd ed., BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 156; Schreiner, *Romans*, 435; Murray, *Romans*, 303; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 508; Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 195; Russell, *The "New Heavens and New Earth"*, 169-70; Moo, "Romans 8.19-22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant," 79. Lampe and Byrne, however, are examples of those who believe the reference to be Adam. Lampe, "The New Testament Doctrine of *Ktisis*," 458; Byrne, *Romans*, 260-61.

⁵¹Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:414; Stott, *Romans*, 239-41; Schreiner, *Romans*, 435; Murray, *Romans*, 303; Hahne, *The Corruption and Redemption of Creation*, 195; Russell, *The "New Heavens and New Earth"*, 169-70; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 508.

⁵²Of course, God subjects the creation to futility as a result of Adam's sin, but God himself subjects it nonetheless. Therefore, God is the referent for τὸν as Paul writes, "διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα." Schreiner notes, "Indeed, the verb ὑποτάσσειν refers to God's (or Christ's) subjecting work elsewhere in Paul (1 Cor. 15:27-28; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 3:21)." Schreiner, *Romans*, 435. For further support that God is the referent for τὸν in the phrase "διὰ τὸν ὑποτάξαντα," see Moo, *Romans*, 516; Schreiner, *Romans*, 435-38; Stott, *Romans*, 238-41; Lawrence H. Osborn, "Creation" in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 434; Cranfield, "Some Observations on Romans 8:19-21," 228; Murray, *Romans*, 303; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 471; Moo, "Romans 8.19-22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant," 79; William J. Dumbrell, *Romans: A New Covenant Commentary* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2005), 91; Russell, *The "New Heavens and New Earth"*, 169-70. Against this, those seeing Adam or man as the subject include Blocher, *In the Beginning*, 183 n. 26; Lampe, "The New Testament Doctrine of *Ktisis*," 458. Interestingly, Byrne notes, "In the original account of Gen 3:17-19 it is God who curses the earth because of Adam's sin," yet he still concludes that Paul has Adam in mind. Byrne, *Romans*, 258.

⁵³Ovey, "The Cross, Creation and the Human Predicament," 107.

should go back upon His word. . . . If death did not hold dominion over men, God would still remain untrue.”⁵⁴ Therefore, when Adam ate the fruit in Genesis 3 and God addressed him in judgment, the reader should understand this divine judgment as the fulfillment of the threat of death from Genesis 2:17.⁵⁵ For this reason, that which follows in the divine curse is the result of death’s intrusion into the world.

Instead of death impacting only man, however, death’s dominion takes hold of the created order as well. Dunn notes this well, writing, “The *adam* was formed to till the *adamah* (2.5-9); and subsequently the *adamah* is caught up in *adam*’s penalty for his disobedience . . . a penalty which will last till *adam* returns to the *adamah* (3.17-19).⁵⁶ Since the one to rule over the created order had made himself subject to the reigning enemy of death,⁵⁷ so the creation under his dominion is made subject to death as well. The entire created order is now captive to this reigning enemy as it is subjected to death’s dominion.

Paul confirms this conclusion when he speaks of death coming into the world and reigning through Adam’s sin in Romans 5:12-21. One cannot miss the connection between Adam’s sin and the reign of death as Paul proclaims repeatedly that death

⁵⁴Athanasius, *On the Incarnation: The Treatise De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, trans. and ed. A. Religious of C. S. M. V. (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1996), 32-33.

⁵⁵Adams, *Constructing the World*, 172-74; Paul Sevier Minear, *Christians and the New Creation: Genesis Motifs in the New Testament* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 76; Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 103; Moore, “Personal and Cosmic Eschatology,” 893; Gathercole, “Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood,” 176; Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, 30-31.

⁵⁶Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 83. Dunn later adds, “The point to be underlined here is the solidarity of humankind with the rest of creation, of *adam* with the *adamah* from which *adam* was made.” *Ibid.*, 100-01. See also Gathercole, “Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood,” 176.

⁵⁷“Instead of Adam ruling the world, death ruled over him,” Schreiner, *Romans*, 286; see also Dahl, “Two Notes on Romans 5,” 47.

entered the world and reigns because of one man's sin.⁵⁸ Therefore, Adam's sin leads to an overturning of the beautiful picture God established in the garden. Instead of all of creation filled with God's glory and subdued under the just reign of its righteous king, God's image-bearer, and son, the created order becomes enemy-occupied territory, a habitat where death reigns.⁵⁹

Genesis 3 displays the corruption of creation stemming from God's decree of judgment in Genesis 3:17. This curse was a fulfillment of the divine promise that if Adam were to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he would die (Gen 2:17). Adam's bondage to death, however, did not affect him alone, but his judgment impacted the created order so that it was subjected to futility as well. Thus, Genesis 3 reveals the source of creation's bondage to corruption—the declaration of divine judgment following Adam's sin.

Another Son? Israel, Land, and a Microcosm of Creation's Plight

The connection between the judgment on humanity and the corruption of creation is not limited to the Adamic account alone, however. Rather, this scene of

⁵⁸“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin . . . death reigned from Adam to Moses . . . many died through one man's trespass . . . because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man” (Rom 5:12, 14, 15, 17). Hoekema writes of Rom 5:12-21, “This passage, in fact, is an obvious echo of Genesis 2:17.” Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future*, 83.

⁵⁹Sailhamer writes, “The present condition of the land is the result of humankind's rebellion. . . . In these reversals [vv. 17-19] the author suggests that the death sentence (2:17) has now fallen over God's good creation.” John H. Sailhamer, *Genesis*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 92-93. For further argument that creation's plight is best seen as death's reign over the created order, see Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus: ‘The Scandal of the Cross,’” in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frame A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 152; Adams, “Paul's Story of God and Creation,” 27; idem, *Constructing the World*, 189; Moore, “Personal and Cosmic Eschatology,” 893; Minear, *Christians and the New Creation*, 76; Sawyer, “The New Adam in the Theology of St Paul,” 111.

divine judgment on human sin affecting the created order is played out repeatedly in Israel's history.⁶⁰ In her enlightening work which examines the nine passages in the prophetic writings where the earth is said to mourn or groan in relation to humanity's sin, Katherine Hayes highlights a repeated pattern of human sin, divine judgment, and the resultant distress and mourning of the earth.⁶¹ Similarly, Laurie Braaten, whose study focuses on eight of the passages investigated by Hayes,⁶² notes as well that creation is continuously "subjected to a deathlike condition" because of divine judgment on man's sin.⁶³ Braaten specifically examines these texts in order to shed light on Romans 8:22 and thus determines that Paul's argument in that text is built upon his observing of this repeated pattern throughout the prophetic literature. Therefore, she concludes that *"creation's fate, whether groaning or being redeemed, is connected to the interplay between human sin and the divine response of judgment or redemption."*⁶⁴

⁶⁰Moo's articulation of this reality is probably best as he notes that "the effects of the subjection of creation [in Gen 3:17] continue to be worked out in the context of a dynamic and ongoing relationship between God, Adamic humanity, and the rest of creation." Moo, "Romans 8.19-22 and Isaiah's Cosmic Covenant," 84.

⁶¹Katherine M. Hayes, *"The Earth Mourns" Prophetic Metaphor and Oral Aesthetic*, AcBib, no. 8 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002). The nine texts she examines include Amos 1:2; Hos 4:1-3; Jer 4:23-28; 12:1-4, 7-13; 23:9-12; Isa 24:1-20; 33:7-9; and Joel 1:5-20. This language is crucial, for Paul says in Rom 8:22 that the result of creation's subjection to futility is that the creation has been "groaning" (συστενάζει).

⁶²Braaten, "All Creation Groans," 131-59. The only text Hayes looks at that Braaten does not give attention to is Amos 1:2.

⁶³Ibid., 144-45. Keesmaat also notes the connection between the people's obedience and the fruitfulness of the earth and the people's disobedience and suffering of the earth. Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 104.

⁶⁴Braaten, "All Creation Groans," 147 (emphasis in original). As previously noted, Braaten, sees Paul's declaration that the earth presently mourns not as a commentary on what happened in Gen 3:17-19. Rather, she argues that Paul has in mind the mourning of the earth in response to God's judgment throughout history, not just in a one-time episode in the Fall. This conclusion, however, does not lead her away from recognizing that creation's suffering is tied to man's condemnation nor that creation's freedom will only become a reality when man's freedom from condemnation is revealed at the resurrection. Ibid.

Though it is unnecessary to repeat the investigations of these two scholars, it is doubtlessly helpful to illustrate their findings by examining one of these episodes in the prophetic literature. Therefore, this section will look at the connection between human sin, divine judgment, and the corruption of the created order as played out in Isaiah 24:1-20. Prior to the investigation of Isaiah 24:1-20, however, this section will first examine the covenant curses laid out in Deuteronomy 29:22-28, which form the basis of the repeated pattern of human sin, divine judgment, and corruption of the earth that is seen throughout Israel's history.

Deuteronomy 29:22-28

Deuteronomy 29:22-28 makes explicit the connection between human sin, divine judgment, and the decay of the earth.⁶⁵ In the preceding chapter, Moses proclaims to the people the blessings that God would bestow upon them for obedience to the Sinaitic covenant and the curses which God would inflict on them for their disobedience. As with divine prohibition in the garden (Gen 2:17), so here, the result of disobedience is announced beforehand. Should they find themselves guilty of violating the covenant, God would afflict them with curses. Further, the curses would not be limited or restrained in their scope. Rather, they would be all-consuming, something made evident in the opening verses of the section:

But if you will not obey the voice of the LORD your God or be careful to do all his commandments and his statutes that I command you today, then all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you. Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed shall be the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock. Cursed shall you be when you

⁶⁵Keesmaat rightly notes that whereas this pattern may be found throughout the prophetic literature, it is made explicit in these verses. Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 105.

come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out (28:15-19).⁶⁶

What is also made clear throughout is that the Lord himself would inflict this judgment. Yahweh is the repeated subject throughout the chapter.⁶⁷ He is explicitly mentioned as the one who would cause them to be defeated before their enemies (v. 20), make the pestilence stick to them (v. 21), strike them with wasting disease and fever (v. 22), cause their enemies to defeat them (v. 25) strike them with boils, tumors, madness, blindness, and confusion of mind (vv. 27-28), set over them a foreign king (v. 36), bring on them afflictions and sickness (v. 59), and scatter them “from one end of the earth to the other” (v. 64). Furthermore, such actions would be God’s good and righteous response, as Moses declares, “As the LORD took delight in doing you good and multiplying you, so the LORD will take delight in bringing ruin upon you and destroying you” (v. 63).

With this declaration of blessings and curses, the Lord outlines for Israel the reality of their position in the world. They will be “an open stage”⁶⁸ before all mankind. Wright describes well the nature of Israel’s role:

The behavior of God’s people and God’s own actions toward them are performed in full view of the rest of [the] world and in the full glare of history. This public position could be positive or negative. Israel could become the means of the nations coming to know God because of the blessing that would accompany their obedience (28:10), or they could become “an object of scorn and ridicule to all the nations” because of the judgments that would befall them in their disobedience (28:37).⁶⁹

Therefore, as Moses warns the people to beware lest there be any heart that turns from

⁶⁶“The comprehensiveness of the blessings and especially of the curses aims to show that all of life’s possibilities lie within the purview of Yahweh.” J. G. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, AOTC, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 409.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Christopher Wright, *Deuteronomy*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 288.

⁶⁹Ibid.

the Lord, he describes for them the picture of “scorn and ridicule” that would come should they violate the covenant. This predicted reaction is recorded in Deuteronomy 29:22-28,

And the next generation, your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, will say, when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the Lord has made it sick—the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout, an overthrow like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in his anger and wrath—all the nations will say, “Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great anger?” Then people will say, “It is because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt, and went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods whom they had not known and whom he had not allotted to them. Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, bringing upon it all the curses written in this book, and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land, as they are this day.

Though the suffering of the land is described in these verses in greater detail than the brief mention of the curse on the ground noted in Genesis 3:17, the pattern first discovered in that text and which will later be evident in Isaiah 24:1-20 (of human sin, condemnation, and the suffering of the earth) is again explicit here. So also there are a number of details in this text that mirror Genesis 3:17-19. As in the garden, so here, it is the Lord who brings destruction upon the people in the land. It will be so obvious that the Lord is the one imposing judgment that the foreign nations will see no need to ask who is doing this.⁷⁰ Rather, they will merely question the *reason* for Yahweh’s actions, asking, “Why has the Lord done thus to this land? What caused the heat of this great

⁷⁰Tigay concludes that it will be obvious to all that this was not an “accident of nature” but an “act of God.” Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, JPSTC (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 282. Von Rad misses this note, wrongly asserting that the nations “will begin to inquire into the cause of this alarming catastrophe, and they will discover that Yahweh himself has cursed his idol-worshipping people.” Gerhard Von Rad, *Deuteronomy*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966), 180.

anger?” (v. 24). Moreover, just as in the Adamic episode, the creation itself becomes a major character. That which will draw the attention of Israel’s children and the foreigner to ask why God is bringing such devastation is the condition of the land itself.⁷¹ It is “when they see the afflictions of that land and the sicknesses with which the Lord has made it sick—the whole land burned out with brimstone and salt, nothing sown and nothing growing, where no plant can sprout” (vv. 22-23) that they will question why this has happened? And their specific question will focus on the land, as they ask, “Why has the LORD done thus *to the land?*” (v. 24). It is no doubt unnecessary to stress the weight of answering such a question while attempting to determine what is currently wrong with creation so that it needs to be transformed and redeemed. Why, in this text, will creation be subjected to this deathlike state?

Not surprisingly, the answer is the same as that of Genesis 3. It is because of the people’s transgressions against their God. The text provides the exact language of the answer, leaving no room for disagreement among interpreters, as the people say, “It is because they abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their fathers, which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt” (v. 25). That is, it is because the people stand guilty of transgressing the covenant before God that God afflicts the land and makes it sick.⁷² Again, the deathlike condition of the earth is founded upon the legal standing of its inhabitants before their God, and those individuals stand guilty of covenant violations.

⁷¹McConville argues that “land” is the leading motif in this section, evident by its repetition throughout. McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 418.

⁷²Craigie thus concludes that the punishment is that of retribution. Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 359.

Furthermore, the Lord's reaction to the people's guilt is not to remain distant and let nature take its course. Rather, his response is personal and fierce.⁷³ The Lord's judgment will mirror that of Sodom and Gomorra, which he "overthrew in his anger and wrath" (v. 23) as the "anger of the Lord" is "kindled against the land, bringing upon it all the curses" (v. 27) he had declared. The Lord will uproot the people in his "anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land" (v. 28). It is a violent picture in which God will leave no doubt that he is personally pouring out his fury and anger in judgment as he sends the curses upon the land.

Thus, Deuteronomy 29:22-28 provides another example wherein the earth's corruption is due to nothing within creation itself but to the guilt of those who inhabit it.⁷⁴ The deathlike condition of the land is the consequence of being caught up in the judgment that has come upon its inhabitants as they have been declared guilty of violating the covenant the Lord made with them when he brought them out of Egypt. This picture is not only consistent with that in Genesis 3:17-19 but provides the basis for why this pattern of human guilt and divine judgment affecting even the land itself is found throughout the prophetic literature. As in Genesis 2:17, so in Deuteronomy 28, God gave prohibitions to his people that must be obeyed, otherwise their guilt would be manifest before all nations as a divine curse that would weigh heavily on the land itself.

⁷³McConville suggests that God's wrath "finds its most concentrated expression in the book in these verses." McConville, *Deuteronomy*, 418.

⁷⁴The land's subjection to a deathlike condition is so obviously the result of the sins of individual persons that Tigay expresses surprise at the land's suffering. He writes, "In this section, Moses speaks of the entire land being punished for its violation of the covenant. Reference to the entire land is unexpected, since verse 17 listed only an individual, a clan or a tribe as potential violators." Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, 281.

It should not be surprising, then, that this scene is played out consistently throughout Israel's history, as they are prone to violating the covenant. One such episode is found in Isaiah 24:1-20.

Isaiah 24:1-20

Isaiah 24-27 begins a segment within the book in which the prophet broadens his focus to include language of cosmic judgment. Though chapters 13-23 examine the Lord's judgment against specific nations, including Babylon, Damascus, and Egypt (among others), chapter 24 turns the reader's attention to a judgment that is centered on Jerusalem and yet affects all of creation.⁷⁵ It has been suggested that these chapters could be titled along the lines of Dickens' famous novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*,⁷⁶ as the judgment and renewal of the earth is seen as the inevitable consequence through the lens of the judgment and renewal of a particular city.⁷⁷ This dichotomy of the cities' fortunes

⁷⁵The exact focus of the judgment has caused great debate, since there appears language of judgment for the particular city of Jerusalem and the particular people of that city while also including language of universal judgment. The universal aspect of judgment has been recognized most strongly by interpreters such as John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 440, 443; Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 159; Braaten, "All Creation Groans," 145; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, NAC, vol. 15A (Nashville: B&H, 2007), 405, 413; Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 19-39*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 146-47; Otto Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, OTL (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974), 181-82. However, some have argued that the reference is solely to the judgment of Jerusalem while ignoring cosmic language, such as Robert Lowth, *Isaiah: A New Translation; with a Preliminary Dissertation and Notes, Critical, Philological, and Explanatory* (Glasgow: University Press, 1822), 182-87. Johnson has argued that the focus is on Jerusalem specifically but that the prophet is showing that Jerusalem's judgment and exile will have cosmic effects. Dan G. Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration: An Integrative Reading of Isaiah 24-27*, JSOTSup, vol. 61 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1988), 44-47. He notes, "If Israel's heart and center, Jerusalem, is reduced to chaos, then it is inevitable, to this way of thinking, that the whole cosmos will be reduced to chaos." Ibid. Motyer seems to take a similar view; see J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 194.

⁷⁶Christopher R. Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1993), 172. Similarly, Motyer refers to this section as "Two cities in contrast." Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 194. Also, Oswalt sees these chapters as a "contrast between the City of Man and the City of God." Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 443.

is seen throughout as the section begins with an image in which the earth itself is taken up in the suffering that results from God's judgment upon human sin and concludes with a scene in which the whole earth is filled with fruit, guilt has been atoned for, and people come from all over the earth to "worship the LORD on the holy mountain at Jerusalem" (27:13). The following section will focus on the first of these episodes (judgment), portrayed in Isaiah 24:1-20.

As one reads Isaiah 24:1-20, it is quickly discovered that the earth⁷⁸ is one of the main characters in this text. The word itself (אֶרֶץ) appears throughout these verses, and the first section of the poem begins and ends by speaking of coming desolation of which the earth is the object.⁷⁹ Further, the first six verses provide a graphic portrayal of creation's desolation. The earth is described as having its surface twisted by God's hand (v. 1), becoming "utterly empty" as it is plundered (v. 3), mourning and languishing as it withers (v. 4), lying defiled under its inhabitants (v. 5), and being devoured under a curse (v. 6). Additionally, the section concludes with an equally graphic picture of the earth's suffering as it is "utterly broken," "split apart," "violently shaken" (v. 19), and "staggers like a drunken man" with its transgression lying heavily upon it, having fallen and being

⁷⁷Those recognizing this relationship between Jerusalem and the cosmos to some degree include, Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, 44-47; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 441; Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 194; Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 19-39*, 146; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 174; Hans Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, A Continental Commentary (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997), 446.

⁷⁸Throughout this text אֶרֶץ could be translated "earth" or "land." However, in light of the cosmic imagery, it is best translated "earth." Even Johnson, who sees Jerusalem as the focus of judgment, concludes that "earth" is the best translation, since the judgment of Jerusalem will have universal repercussions. Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, 26.

⁷⁹Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 141. Hayes notes that "earth" appears fourteen times in Isaiah 24:1-20, sometimes as distinct from its inhabitants (24:1b, 4-5, 6, 17, 18-19, 20a) and at other times including them (24:1a, 13, 20b). Ibid. And Oswalt notes that it is repeated seventeen times throughout the chapter as a whole. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 443.

unable to rise again (v. 20). The desolation described here is provided in greater detail than anything that is found in Genesis 3:17-19 alone, as the details of the earth's suffering are made explicit.

However, there is also much that this text has in common with the curse on the earth found in Genesis 3 and later echoed in Deuteronomy 29. As in each of these prior episodes, the reason for the earth suffering is ultimately due to the action of God. That is, Yahweh is the actor who is bringing destruction to the earth.⁸⁰ The chapter begins, "Behold, *the LORD* will empty the earth and make it desolate, and *he* will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants" (v. 1). The first section (vv. 1-3), then, concludes by noting that the earth shall be utterly empty and utterly plundered "for *the LORD* has spoken this word" (v. 3). Further, the section as a whole concludes in verses 18-20 by repeating the theme established in verses 1-3, and is followed by a reference to Yahweh inflicting punishment (v. 21), adding further support that the Lord himself is the agent under whose hand the earth is afflicted.⁸¹

Lest one conclude that the Lord's action is arbitrary or senseless, however, the text provides for the reader the reason why the earth is subjected to such devastation. The author writes, "The earth lies defiled under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant" (v. 5). As in the Adamic episode and in Deuteronomy 29, so in this text, the reader finds that the defilement of the

⁸⁰Watts notes, "The recognition that *Yahweh* himself is *laying waste the land* makes the statement take on a measure of horror." John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, WBC, vol. 24 (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 315 (emphasis original). See also, Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 414; Braaten, "All Creation Groans," 145-46; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39*, 444-45; Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 141, 149; Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 197-98; Russell, *The "New Heaves and New Earth,"* 61 n. 64; Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 19-39*, 148; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, 182; Childs, *Isaiah*, 178.

⁸¹Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 204.

earth is tied to the sin and guilt of its inhabitants. It is the sin of *individuals* that leads to the earth's subjection to this deathlike condition.⁸² The particular covenant broken by the people is debated,⁸³ but there is widespread agreement that the earth suffers because of man's transgressions of God's law.⁸⁴ Thus, even the "transgression" of verse 20 that "lies heavy" on the earth is not that of the earth itself but that of its inhabitants.⁸⁵

Yet the connection between the sins of the earth's inhabitants and the resultant suffering of the earth itself is made more explicit in verse 6 as the author declares, "Therefore, a curse devours the earth, and its inhabitants suffer for their guilt." That is, because of the reality that has just been declared in verse 5 (that the inhabitants of the earth have transgressed God's laws, violated his statutes, and broken the everlasting covenant), the earth is devoured by a curse. This relationship between man's sin and the

⁸²Thwarting any attempt somehow to abstract the notion of sin from individuals, Watts rightly comments, "Countries do not have sins, but people do. And countries suffer as a consequence of the guilt of their peoples." Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 317.

⁸³The main suggestions are that the covenant that has been broken is either the covenant with creation, the Noahic covenant, Sinaitic covenant, or a combination of covenants. For an example of one arguing for the covenant at creation, see Young, *Isaiah 19-39*, 158. Those arguing for a reference to the Nohaic covenant include Seitz, *Isaiah 1-39*, 180-84; Russell, *The "New Heavens and New Earth,"* 60; Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39*, AB, vol. 19 (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 351-52; Childs, *Isaiah*, 179; Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, 183; Steven D. Mason, "Another Flood? Genesis 9 and Isaiah's Broken Eternal Covenant," *JSOT* 32, no. 2 (2007): 177-98; Watts, *Isaiah 1-33*, 318. Oswalt notes that the specific reference is most likely to the Nohaic covenant but that the broader reference is to the "covenant between Creator and creature . . . laid down at Creation" (Oswalt, *Isaiah 1-39*, 446). For an argument that the reference is mainly to the Sinaitic covenant, see Johnson, *From Chaos to Restoration*, 27-29. Wildberger also notes that the Sinaitic covenant is referenced here although he thinks it is referenced along with the Noahic covenant. Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 479-81. Similarly, Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 416-17. Finally, for an argument that the covenant is a reference to a combination of multiple covenants, see Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 199.

⁸⁴See, for example, Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 150-52; Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 197-200; Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 416-18; Braaten, "All Creation Groans, 145-46; Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 1-39*, 446; Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 19-39*, 156-57; Childs, *Isaiah*, 179; Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 479.

⁸⁵Russell rightly notes, "It still remains his essentially good creation even when implicated in humanity's judgment." Russell, *The "New Heaves and New Earth,"* 61. See also Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 19-39*, 177-78.

judgment that is played out on the earth has been highlighted well by Hayes, who writes,

A direct relationship is drawn in Isa 24:5-6 between human transgression (24:5) and curse (24:6) by means of linking the phrase *'al-kēn*, “and so.” . . . That act begets consequence is underscored twice in 24:6. First, the description of the curse in the first colon is followed in the second by the explicit statement: “and its inhabitants bear their guilt” (*wayye šēmû*). Here the use of a *wayyiqtol* form reinforces the sense of the logical consequence established by *'al-kēn* in the preceding colon. Second, the phrase *'al-kēn* is reiterated at the beginning of the next bicolon: “And so the inhabitants of the earth have dwindled/and few are left.”⁸⁶

Therefore, though the connection between human sin and creation’s suffering is clear, it is not immediate. Rather, as noted by Hayes, a divine curse stands as a middle factor between human sin and the suffering of the earth. That is, man’s sin only has the devastating effect on the land because of the divine agency of a curse.⁸⁷ Thus, the reader should understand the relationship in this poem to be as follows: human sin is met with divine judgment in which God inflicts a curse upon the earth so that it is subject to a “deathlike condition.”⁸⁸ This again mirrors the pattern of Genesis 3, in which Adam’s sin was met with divine judgment in the form of a curse.⁸⁹

Moreover, if Paul’s reference to creation “groaning” in its subjection to futility

⁸⁶Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 151. Hayes also notes that the connection seen in 24:5-6 is repeated in 24:19-20. She writes, “The direct relationship between transgression and curse, act and consequence evident in 24:4-6 is also manifest in the conclusion of the poem (24:19-20). The final bicolon implies that the earth is breaking down under the weight of its own transgressions. Just as in 24:5 the earth lies polluted under (*tahat*) its inhabitants and their violations of law, decree, and covenant, so in 24:20 the earth falls (*wēnāpēlā*) under the weight of the transgressions that lie upon it (*'ālēhā*). The use of the verb *hēpēr*, ‘to break, violate,’ to describe the violation of the eternal covenant (24:5) and of *hitpōrēr*, ‘to split or break apart,’ to convey the shuddering of the earth (24:19) forms a verbal echo that reinforces the connection between act and consequence.” Ibid.

⁸⁷Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 199 (emphasis original). Also see Young’s similar comments; Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 19-39*, 159.

⁸⁸Braaten, “All Creation Groans,” 145.

⁸⁹Russell draws an explicit connection between this reality in Isa 24 and Gen 3. Russell, *The “New Heavens and New Earth,”* 60. So also Young, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 19-39*, 156.

(Rom 8:20-22) is a commentary on the events found in Genesis 3:17-19,⁹⁰ then the note of Isaiah 24:4 (i.e., that the “earth mourns”) reveals yet another connection between the curse of Genesis 3 and that which is witness in Isaiah 24. That is, in both cases, the earth agonizes because of the divine judgment that has fallen in response to human sin.

The unfolding pattern in this text between human sin and the devastation of the earth should be stated more clearly, however. Already it has been shown that human sin led to the divine curse which led to the suffering of creation which in turn led to the earth mourning. However, it is helpful to state clearly that the divine curse under which creation lies in this text is due to God’s legal sentence on humanity. The author declares explicitly in verse 6 that the curse devours the earth and its inhabitants suffer “for their guilt.” Therefore, it is God’s condemnation of mankind, whereby they are declared guilty for their transgressions, that leads to the demonstration of judgment wherein the earth is subjected to a divine curse. That is, the episode of cosmic suffering in Isaiah 24:1-20 is the result of the legal standing of individuals before God. The people have “transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, [and] broken the covenant” (v.5). Therefore, they are guilty before God and, consequently, “suffer for their guilt” (v.6).⁹¹ But (just as in Gen 3 and Deut 29) their suffering does not affect humanity alone. Rather, the earth itself is caught up in the judgment that has fallen on the covenant violators as well so that the created order itself suffers under the divine curse and mourns. This is the pattern revealed in Isaiah 24:1-20, and it is a pattern that mirrors the relationship between human

⁹⁰See n. 19, above.

⁹¹In commenting on v. 6, Wildberger writes, “In keeping with the synthetic view of the OT, נשׂא does not mean only ‘be guilty,’ but also ‘bear the punishment for it, bear the consequences of the transgression.” Wildberger, *Isaiah 13-27*, 481. See also Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39*, 184; Smith, *Isaiah 1-39*, 417; Hayes, *The Earth Mourns*, 152.

sin, divine judgment, curse, and creation's subjection to decay found in Genesis 3:17-19 and Deuteronomy 29:22-28.

These findings in Deuteronomy 29:22-28 and Isaiah 24:1-20 aid to support the conclusion that creation's bondage to corruption is tied to the divine condemnation that fell on Adam (and all of humanity in him) in two ways. First, they provide further examples outside of the context of Genesis 3 where human guilt serves as the basis for divine punishment which affects not only individuals but the land they inhabit as well. Second, these texts carry particular weight in supporting the findings in Genesis 3:17 since Israel⁹² is best understood as another installment of Adam⁹³ in the biblical storyline, wherein they illustrate in narrower terms that which had taken place on a cosmic scale—something that will now be shown in greater detail.⁹⁴

Israel as God's Son

Adam's sin in the garden, condemnation for sin, and the subsequent curse on the ground is most accurately articulated as a loss of the privileges of sonship.⁹⁵ After Genesis 3, man's glory is no longer clearly evident in his wise rule over the created order, but rather the earth itself brings him difficulty. As the biblical storyline unfolds,

⁹²Obviously, Israel is the subject in Deut 29:22-28, since they are the ones with whom God made the covenant when bringing them out of Egypt. However, Isa 24-27 deals with Israel as well, since Jerusalem is the lens through which the whole world is affected.

⁹³I am indebted to Stephen Wellum for the language of Israel as an "installment" of Adam who mentioned it in conversation concerning Israel's role in the storyline of Scripture.

⁹⁴As evidence that Israel's role over the land is a reflection of Adam's cosmic role over the earth, Paul does not refer to Jesus as a second or last Israel but as a second and last Adam.

⁹⁵Mathews notes, "The 'glory' of sonship faded," and adds, "It is creation's 'glory' indicating mankind's appointment as the Lord's ruling sonship, that is diminished through sin." Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 164, 170-71. See also Ferguson, *Children of the Living God*, 8; Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 111; Garner, "The First and Last Son," 265-66.

however, the reader discerns that God is revealing his plan of redemption through Abraham in Genesis 12. One may equally say that in the calling of Abraham, God is revealing his intention to restore to his people the full privileges of sonship⁹⁶ that were first witnessed in the garden and will again be seen when God's people are raised and revealed as sons to reign alongside of the Christ (Rom 8:12-30). Prior to the appointment of the true Son,⁹⁷ however, another installment of Adam is witnessed in the life of Israel. They too are to image God,⁹⁸ are given land over which to rule, and are to live in obedience to God.

Fittingly, then, when the Lord forms his people, Israel, he refers to them as his "son." As Israel is in slavery in Egypt, God commands Moses to say to Pharaoh, "Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, 'Let my son go that he may serve me'" (Exod 4:22-23). Then, when Israel is delivered from Egypt, the Lord describes the task as one of calling out his son (Hos 11:1). As God's son, they are eventually brought into the promised land that "lay subdued before them" (Josh 18:1)—the very language given to Adam⁹⁹—and the land which they inherit is described in terms of Eden.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, as Beale notes, "It is not an overstatement to say that Israel was

⁹⁶Adams writes, "The blessing promised to Abraham [and] to those who follow in the footsteps of his faith is nothing less than 'the restoration of Gods created order, of man to his Adamic status as steward of the rest of God's creation,'" Adams, "Paul's Story," 35. See also McCartney, "*Ecce Homo*," 3; Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 116; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 116-21.

⁹⁷Fittingly called another "Adam" (1 Cor 15:45).

⁹⁸Lev 11:44; 19:2.

⁹⁹That the language of Josh 18:1 and Gen 1:28 is the same is noted by Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 126.

¹⁰⁰Beale notes, "Israel's land is explicitly compared to the Garden of Eden (see Gen. 13:10; Is. 51:3; Ezek. 36:35; 47:12; Joel 2:3) and is portrayed as very fruitful in order to heighten the correspondence

conceived of as a ‘corporate Adam.’”¹⁰¹ Yet he also rightly adds, “Nevertheless, like Adam, Israel sinned and was cast away from God’s presence and out of the land,”¹⁰² pointing the reader to look further in the storyline of Scripture to the one who would fittingly bear the title “son of God.”¹⁰³

Because Israel’s function in the Bible, at least in part, then, is to serve as another installment of Adam, reigning over a piece of land which is a microcosm of the earth,¹⁰⁴ uncovering that the basis for the land’s subjection to a deathlike condition under *Israel* carries substantial weight in determining what went wrong with the earth under *Adam*. In light of what has been shown from Genesis 3:17-19, it should not, then, be surprising to find that (like Adam before them) it is the people’s guilt before God that serves as the basis for the land’s bondage to decay. Thus, Genesis 3:17-19, Deuteronomy 29:22-28, and Isaiah 24:1-20 all confirm the same reality—the suffering of creation has

to Eden (cf. Deut. 8:7-10; 11:8-17; Ezek. 47:1-12).” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 116. See also Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 29.

¹⁰¹Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 120-21. Similarly, see N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 26; Gentry, “Kingdom through Covenant,” 29; idem, “Rethinking the ‘Sure Mercies of David,’” 286. Concerning Israel’s place in the biblical storyline, Dempster helpfully points out, “The larger literary context of the Tanakh has significant hermeneutical implications. For example, it begins with Genesis rather than with Exodus, signifying that Israel’s national history is subordinated to that of world history. Hermeneutically, this means that the birth of Israel as a nation and its *raison d’être* are set within God’s larger purposes for the world and for creation,” Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 23. Therefore, it seems fitting to view Israel as a type, corporate-microcosm, or installment of what Adam represented.

¹⁰²Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 117.

¹⁰³I have written “son of God” with a lowercase “s” because I am reflecting that Jesus fulfills the role of the man, Adam. Therefore, this category “son of God” in Scripture does not always denote deity (e.g., with Adam and Israel). However, in Jesus’ case, he is the true son of God and simultaneously God, the Son, since he is the God-man.

¹⁰⁴Jon D. Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” *JR* 64 (1984): 275-98; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*; Jon Laansma, “Rest,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 728.

its source in the legal sentence of guilt borne by Adamic humanity and the subsequent divine punishment that affects not only mankind but the creation over which humanity was to rule.

The Curse as Judicial – Death as a Manifestation of Condemnation

The connection between Adam’s condemnation and the rule of death over the created order so that it is held in “bondage to decay” is also confirmed in Romans 5:12-21. Thus far, this chapter has argued that Adam’s guilt in violating the divine prohibition (Gen 2:17) brought about judgment on the ground whereby not only Adam was subject to death’s dominion but also the created order over which he was to rule. This pattern of individuals’ sin and guilt bringing about a deathlike condition to the earth itself was also demonstrated in Deuteronomy 29:22-28 and Isaiah 24:1-20. However, it is not only in Old Testament narrative or poetic texts that one finds this critical connection between condemnation and the reign of death over all of creation. This is also the teaching of Paul in Romans 5:12-21.¹⁰⁵

Adam Sin and Death’s Reign

The debate over Romans 5:12 has been well rehearsed.¹⁰⁶ The questions range from whether man is forensically represented by Adam or seminally present in him to

¹⁰⁵I will focus primarily in this section on the “Adam portion” of Paul’s argument in Rom 5:12-21, noting only the “Christ portion” of the argument where it sheds light on the relationship of sin, condemnation, and death in Adam’s work. Christ’s work in this text will receive greater focus in chap. 5 of this study.

¹⁰⁶Vickers has provided a good survey of the major positions on this verse. See Brian Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 123-41. See also Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 154-67.

whether man is guilty before God because of his own sin or because of the sin of Adam.¹⁰⁷ The representational view has traditionally argued that when Paul says that “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” the understood implication of this verse is that “all sinned *in Adam*.”¹⁰⁸ That is, in order to understand how all sinned and so die, the reader needs to see that when Adam sinned, all men sinned *in him* as their legal representative. Schreiner argues, however, that the verb ἀμαρτάνειν combined with the subject πάντες makes it difficult to understand Paul to be referring to people sinning corporately in Adam since “the verb refers regularly to voluntary sin that people commit in their own persons.”¹⁰⁹ Thus, he concludes, “It is quite improbable on linguistic grounds that ‘all sinned’ means ‘all sinned in Adam.’”¹¹⁰

The seminal or realist view (which claims that ἐφ’ ᾧ in the phrase ἐφ’ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον should not be translated as “because” but “in whom”), on the other hand, argues that Paul is indeed talking about each individual sinning because every person was

¹⁰⁷These categories are not necessarily exclusive, since one could argue that though man is seminally present in Adam, Paul argues in these verses that Adam is a forensic representative for all “in him,” and one could argue that although individuals’ guilt is “immediate” in Adam, so also they are condemned on the basis of their own sins. Furthermore, these categories are not exhaustive. Jewett, for example, argues that “each person in v. 12 replicates Adam’s fall because of his or her own free will.” Jewett, *Romans*, 376.

¹⁰⁸Proponents of this view include John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959; reprint, Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977), 64-70; idem, *Romans*, 180-87; Moo, *Romans*, 323-28; Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image*, 163-67; Hodge, *Romans*, 236-43.

¹⁰⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 275.

¹¹⁰Ibid. Similarly, see Käsemann, *Romans*, 148-79; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 417; Moo also seems to admit that the linguistic evidence alone tilts in favor of this referring to actual sins, though he disagrees with this interpretation. He writes, “We must admit that the case for interpreting ‘all sinned’ in v. 12d as meaning ‘all people sinned in and with Adam’ rests almost entirely on the juxtaposition of v. 12 with vv. 18-19. And maybe we should not force this combination when Paul himself did not explicitly do so.” Moo, *Romans*, 327.

present (seminally) in Adam and so personally sinned, even as the author of Hebrews argues that Levi himself paid tithes through Abraham, “for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him” (Heb 7:9-10).¹¹¹ The problem with this view, however, is that it forces one to understand the relationship between Adam and humanity and Christ and humanity differently, for there is no basis to claim that any portion of humanity was seminally present in Christ. Therefore, though one should note dissimilarities between the work of Adam and that of Christ in this text, to claim dissimilarity in the manner in which these figures connect to humanity is to undercut the root of the comparison drawn between Adam and Christ. Vickers articulates well the problem with this position, writing,

The contrasts in verses 15-17 are based on the connection that exists between Adam and humanity and Christ and humanity. If something is true, such as death reigning through one person (v. 17), and if it’s also true that those who receive grace and righteousness will reign (v. 17), there must be a recognized condition that exists for both statements. Otherwise, Paul could not say, “how much more.” Therefore, to begin with contrasting ways through which Adam and Christ are connected with humanity or with contrasting ways by which people are either “sinners” or “righteous” (the former through actual sin, the second via another’s obedience) undercuts the “how much more” contrasts in verses 15-17.¹¹²

Therefore, though the seminal view seems to provide a sufficient answer for understanding verse 12, it undercuts the rest of Paul’s argument.

Is there, then, a way to hold to the representational view that sees a forensic connection between Adam and humanity and Christ and humanity (seemingly required by the argument of the text) while also recognizing the claim to individuals’ sins in the

¹¹¹Proponents of this view include William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1894; Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2003), 451-64; Augustus H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1993), 622-37.

¹¹²Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 131; see also Murray, *Imputation of Adam’s Sin*, 39-40.

phrase “because all sinned” (ἐφ’ ᾧ πάντες ἥμαρτον)? Indeed there is. Schreiner has put forth a convincing argument that upholds both of these realities.¹¹³ His argument, in short, is that Adam’s sin ushered in a reign of death that enslaves all men, resulting in their inevitable sinning and consequent death. Schreiner explains in greater detail:

As a result of Adam’s sin death entered the world and engulfed all people; all people enter the world alienated from God and spiritually dead by virtue of Adam’s sin. By virtue of entering the world in the state of death . . . all human beings sin. . . . The personal sin of human beings is explained by the sway death holds over us. Such an interpretation is . . . supported by the notion that death is a power that reigns and rules over us now (Rom. 5:14, 17) and that culminates in physical death.¹¹⁴

Therefore, the flow of verse 12 moves from Adam’s sin, to the spread of death over all men, to all men sinning (and thus providing evidence of death’s reign in their lives).¹¹⁵ Such an argument does not see each man as an island but understands the tyranny of death over all mankind via their union with Adam. This view, therefore, affirms the representative understanding of the first man, seeing Adam as the legal head of those “in him,” while simultaneously accounting for the personal sins of individuals after him and for Paul’s imagery of death as a reigning power. This view also falls in line with those who claim that the prominent feature of these verses is that of “original death” instead of “original sin.”¹¹⁶

¹¹³For Schreiner’s argument concerning Rom 5:12, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 270-81; idem, *Paul: Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001), 146-50.

¹¹⁴Schreiner, *Romans*, 275-76.

¹¹⁵Vickers, who agrees with Schreiner’s understanding of this verse, notes, “Verse 12 contains a chiasm that begins with ‘sin’ (12a), then ‘death’ (12b), then ‘death’ again (12c), then finally ‘sin’ (12d). Thus the structure is A, B, B, A, or Sin, Death, Death, Sin.” Vickers, *Jesus Blood and Righteousness*, 139. One might also add “death” to the end of this pattern as an extrapolation of that which is addressed specifically in v. 12, since all men also physically die.

Romans 5:12-21, thus, answers the question, “Why do all men sin and thus die?” by arguing: “Because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man” (5:17) and “death spread to all men” (5:12) which resulted in all men sinning under death’s dominion (5:21). This should be no surprise in light of the fact that the divine prohibition to Adam in the garden is that the day he ate of the tree he would die (Gen 2:17). Nor is it surprising, since Adam was not only to rule over the created order but was also head of the human race, that the reign of death to which Adam subjected himself holds sway over both the created order and Adam’s progeny. Yet such an acknowledgment alone fails to account for another crucial element in Romans 5:12-21 and, consequently, fails to shed light on a crucial element between Adam’s sin and the resulting spread of death over all of creation—condemnation.

Condemnation Evidenced in Death

It has already been noted that Paul roots the reign of death in Adam’s sin. Paul reiterates this theme throughout his argument (e.g., 5:12, 15, 17). But there is another element in addition to death that is connected with Adam’s sin in these verses, namely, condemnation. Just as Paul shows that death follows Adam’s one sin, he shows that condemnation follows Adam’s sin, writing, “For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation” and “one trespass led to condemnation for all men” (Rom 5:16, 18). In this, Paul shows an unavoidable connection between Adam’s sin, condemnation, and death.¹¹⁷ But if both condemnation and death follow Adam’s sin, then how are these

¹¹⁶Black, “Pauline Perspectives on Death in Romans 5-8,” 420; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 273; Byrne, *Romans*, 176; Schreiner, *Romans*, 276.

two realities related?

The answer is that Paul presents death as the manifestation of God's condemnation of Adam's sin. That is, the rule of death serves as the evidence that Adam has received a legal sentence of condemnation from God.¹¹⁸ This is seen in the relationship explained in 5:16 and 17. Though these verses contrast Adam's work with Christ's, the effect of Adam's sin is seen most clearly when isolating one's focus on Adam's work, thus ignoring temporarily the positive nature of Christ's work in these verses. If one removes the reference to Jesus' positive work from this text, then the argument then reads, "For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation . . . for . . . because of one trespass, death reigned through that one man." How is it then demonstrated that Adam's one trespass brought condemnation? Paul answers, "For . . . death reigned through that one man." Schreiner notes accordingly, "Verse 17 functions as the ground of verse 16 (γάρ, *gar*, for). What is the evidence that all are condemned through Adam . . . ? The evidence for universal condemnation is the reign of death over all people by virtue of Adam."¹¹⁹ Likewise, Vickers writes,

In verse 15 Paul says that "by the transgression of the one, many died," thus forging a link between Adam's transgression and the resultant death for those who followed. In verse 18 he states that "through the transgression of the one there

¹¹⁷Collins rightly notes that in Rom 5:15-19, "'Death' parallels 'condemnation' . . . which parallels 'made sinners.'" C. John Collins, *Genesis 1-4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2006), 180-81.

¹¹⁸Morna H. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 29-31; Lane G. Tipton, "Union with Christ and Justification," in *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott Oliphant (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2007), 36-37; Schreiner, *Romans*, 285-86; Gaffin, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 151-52.

¹¹⁹Schreiner, *Romans*, 285-86. Vickers similarly argues, "If 'death' is understood as the inevitable, existing condition under which everyone *after* Adam lives, and which everyone experiences, then we can understand this text to mean that the condemnation of all on account of Adams sin, which 'came into the world,' is evident because death necessarily spreads to all men." Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness*, 136-37. See also Tipton, "Union with Christ and Justification," 35.

resulted condemnation for all men.” Both death and condemnation result from Adam’s transgression. The evidence from verse 16 is most compelling because there the judgment upon one results in condemnation. In the context it is clear that the same “one-many” pattern is at work here. So the condemnation flows to “all” from the judgment passed on the one, just as many “died” by the one’s trespass (v. 15).

Taken in this way, the *condemnation that comes to humanity through Adam is primarily evident in death*. All are born under God’s condemnation of Adam’s sin.¹²⁰

That is to say, the middle element between Adam’s sin and the universal reign of death is condemnation.¹²¹ Adam received the legal sentence of condemnation, and that condemnation came to all in him so that man’s condemnation is now manifested in the dominion of death over all of humanity.

Having focused on the nature of Adam’s work alone, it is then helpful to turn one’s attention back to the other portion of Paul’s argument, namely, the work of Christ. There, one finds that the logic on this side of Paul’s argument also lends support to the conclusion that the universal reign of death is the evidence of Adam’s condemnation. Having noted in verses 16-17 that Adam’s sin led to universal condemnation manifested in the reign of death, Paul writes in verse 18, “Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification resulting in life for all men.”¹²² The life Paul speaks of in these verses should then be understood as

¹²⁰Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 137 (emphasis added).

¹²¹“In the flow of the argument in Romans 5:12ff. there is a middle factor between sin and death: condemnation (κατάκριμα). Death is God’s judicial reaction to sin, which is to say, death is penal. It is his active punitive response to sin, ‘from the outside’ so to speak, not simply his allowing death as the self-generating result of sin.” Gaffin, “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus,” 151-52. See also, John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 65; Gathercole, “Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood,” 179.

¹²²This is my own translation of δικαίωσιν ζωῆς, which is translated by the ESV “justification and life.” Moo is correct in arguing that it is a genitive of result which is best translated along the lines of “justification that leads to life” (*Romans*, 341 n. 126). Similarly, Seifrid translates the phrase, “the justification which issues in life.” Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of*

the “consequence” of justification.¹²³ That is, the life which believers now know serves as evidence of justification even as death serves as the evidence of condemnation in the prior verses.¹²⁴ This relationship is illustrated below:

sin → condemnation → condemnation evidenced in death
 righteousness → justification → justification evidenced in life

Adam’s sin brought about a legal sentence of condemnation that is demonstrated in a rule of death over Adam and all of the created order in him even as Christ’s righteousness brings a sentence of justification that is evidenced in life for all in him. Therefore, any attempt to remove the reign of death which holds the created order in its bondage must deal with the legal sentence of condemnation which fell on Adam (and all in him) as it is this legal sentence on humanity which underlies the rule of death over all of humanity and the created order which they inhabit.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to show that the problem with the creation that makes its redemption necessary is not rooted in the created order at all. The creation was

Justification, NSBT, vol. 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 71. For similar arguments concerning this phrase, see Schreiner, *Romans*, 283; Murray, *Romans*, 202; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:289; Byrne, *Romans*, 173; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 421; John Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, TPI New Testament Commentaries (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1997), 151; Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930; reprint, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1994), 57.

¹²³Dahl, “Two Notes on Romans 5,” 47-48; Schreiner, *Romans*, 287; Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 57.

¹²⁴That “life” here refers to eternal life, see Byrne, *Romans*, 180; Murray, *Romans*, 203; Moo, *Romans*, 341 n. 126; Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness*, 71; Schreiner, *Romans*, 286-87; Vicker, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 147 n. 129; Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 57; Garlington, *Faith, Obedience, and Perseverance*, 102.

“subjected to futility” and is now held in “bondage to decay” (Rom 8:20-21) through no fault of its own. Rather, the problem with creation is that a legal sentence of condemnation has fallen on Adam (and all in him), and this condemnation is evidenced in a reign of death that extends not simply over Adam’s progeny but over the creation they inhabit as well.

The reason Adam’s condemnation affects all of creation is because he was set over creation as God’s vice-regent and son to exercise dominion over and care for the created order. However, instead of representing his maker’s wise rule, Adam did the one thing prohibited by God in the garden; he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, as Adam was declared guilty before God, his condemnation resulted in death’s reign over him and everything under him, even as had been promised by God (Gen 2:17).

Furthermore, Adam’s relationship to God and the land was repeated in Israel’s history as Israel serves as another installment of Adam, reigning over their inheritance of land as a son of God. Like Adam, when the land was subjected to decay throughout their history, it was rooted in their guilt before God for violating his commands. Therefore, a study of Israel’s history provides further support for the notion that creation’s bondage to decay is rooted in the legal reality of man’s guilt before his Maker.

Finally, a study of Romans 5:12-21 showed that this connection between condemnation and death is not found in the Old Testament alone. Rather, Paul argues that the rule of death over all of humanity is the evidence of condemnation so that as Adam sinned and was condemned, death reigned over all, and so all men stand condemned before God and will die. Therefore, the reader again finds confirmation that

creation's subjection to the reign of death is rooted in a legal sentence—the condemnation of its inhabitants for their sin. Calvin, thus, was right to conclude,

It is then indeed meet for us to consider what a dreadful curse we have deserved, since all created things in themselves blameless, both on earth and in the visible heaven, undergo punishment for our sins; for it has not happened through their own fault, that they are liable to corruption. Thus the condemnation of mankind is imprinted upon the heavens, and on the earth, and on all creatures.¹²⁵

Therefore, if creation's bondage is rooted in humanity's condemnation, any effort to restore the created order that focuses primarily on creation itself is misguided, as it focuses on the consequences of the problem instead the problem itself. The solution to creation's plight must then deal with removing the sentence of condemnation that has fallen on man and is evidenced in the tyrannical reign of death over all of the created order.

¹²⁵John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, in vol. 19 of *Calvin's Commentaries*, ed. and trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 305.

CHAPTER 3

THE NECESSITY AND DIFFICULTY OF REMOVING CONDEMNATION

Introduction

After the observations of the previous chapter, at least one necessary element for the redemption of the created order should now be clear. If the condemnation that fell on Adam is evidenced in the reign of death over all of creation, and if the cosmos needs to be restored because it is held in bondage to that reign, then it is necessary to remove the legal verdict of condemnation underlying this rule of death. As Wright has correctly noted, “The task of the last Adam was not merely to begin something new, but to deal with the problem of the old; not merely to give life, but to deal with death.”¹ Therefore, because the reign of death is rooted in the condemnation of mankind (via union with Adam), this condemnation must be removed from individuals,² for only then will the creation be able to obtain freedom from its bondage to death.³

¹N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 38. Similarly, Adams notes, “The task given by God to Christ is not simply to supplant Adam’s disobedience with an act of obedience, but to undo the terrible consequences of Adam’s failure.” Edward Adams, “Paul’s Story of God and Creation,” in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 27.

²“Individuals” in this sentence is not meant to be understood as all of mankind without exception. Numerous proponents and opponents of penal substitution agree that universalism is not the teaching of Scripture. Thus, for example, both Green and Schreiner argue that individuals will face God’s wrath on the day of judgment. See Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 290-92; idem, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 308; Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament and Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 54. However, it is crucial to note that this condemnation must be removed from “individuals.” Considering that this study is seeking

Having arrived at such a conclusion, the next stage of the argument would appear to be evident. One should proceed to the nature of the atonement, noting the necessity of understanding the cross as penal substitution. After all, the claim of penal substitution is that Christ bore divine judgment for sinners, as their substitute, so that they might no longer bear divine condemnation. And it is this removal of condemnation from individuals that has already been shown as a necessary step in redeeming the created order. However, moving the argument to penal substitution at this point would be a bit premature. The reason for this is because a number of those challenging penal substitution actually feel comfortable affirming that, in the cross, Jesus bore divine judgment for sinners, as their substitute, so that they might no longer bear divine condemnation.

Perhaps surprisingly, those professing evangelicals who oppose penal substitution⁴ do not necessarily disagree that mankind stands condemned before God in Adam, that death is evidence of God's judgment, or that the wrath of God is a reality faced by men outside of Christ.⁵ Indeed, opponents of penal substitution speak of God's

to answer Green's question, "If the purpose of God will be actualized in the restoration of all things, then how is this purpose served by a theory of penal substitutionary atonement?" and that Green perceives the inability of penal substitution rooted in its focus "on the individual, on a forensic judgment, and on the moment of justification," the importance of this particular note is evident.

³It should be noted that in the text which speaks of the created order itself being redeemed (Rom 8:19-22), the chapter begins with a note that those in Christ are no longer under a sentence of condemnation.

⁴Though there are perhaps others who could be included, when I note professing evangelicals denying penal substitution and describe their views in this chapter, I have in mind Clark Pinnock, Joel Green, Stephen Travis, Mark Baker, Paul Fiddes, Christopher Marshall, and J. Denny Weaver (who compose a majority of the main authors behind the current attacks on penal substitution).

⁵See, for example, Joel B. Green, "Death of Christ," in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 206; John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 264; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 54-56, 95.

wrath, judgment, justice, and condemnation. Stephen Travis⁶ even declares, “It is both true and important to say that [Jesus] ‘was judged in our place’ – that he experienced divine judgment on sin.”⁷

Are these “opponents” of penal substitution, then, imaginary sparring partners, created to sharpen the skills of those who simply enjoy debate? No; they are quite real. Only a couple of paragraphs after affirming that Christ “‘was judged in our place’ – that he experienced divine judgement on sin,” Travis argues that the “meaning of the cross is not that God punished his Son in order to avoid punishing humanity.”⁸ That is, the attack on penal substitution is aimed at something deeper than the words one uses when articulating the nature of the atonement. It is centered, rather, on the *meaning* of those words. One might say that this is not a debate over what vocabulary should be used but over what dictionary should be used. And it is this disagreement concerning the meaning

⁶Green relies heavily on Stephen Travis’s understanding of divine judgment and wrath, referencing him almost without exception when explaining these issues in his writings. See, for example, Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 63; Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus and the Meaning of the Atonement*, 264; Green, “Death of Christ,” 206; Joel B. Green, “Must We Imagine the Atonement in Penal Substitutionary Terms? Questions, Caveats, and a Plea,” in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 162-63 n. 27.

⁷Stephen H. Travis, “Christ as the Bearer of Divine Judgment in Paul’s Thought about the Atonement,” in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 345. Similarly, Fiddes writes that Jesus “dies under the judgement of God.” Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 91.

⁸Stephen Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in the New Testament Thought*, 2nd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 199-200. This apparent contradiction in thought is especially evident with the publication of his revised and updated *Christ and the Judgment of God*. At points, Travis appears to have moved toward more affirmation of penal substitution. He notes, “I do not myself want to claim that penal substitution has no place in an account of Paul’s thought about the cross or in a Christian theology of the atonement.” Yet, he later dismisses the notion that Christ is punished in the place of sinners. Therefore, Travis affirms penal substitution only after altering its intended meaning. That is, he in no way affirms the traditional understanding of penal substitutionary atonement. *Ibid.*, 195-200.

of words and concepts that has led many to deny that penal substitutionary atonement is a biblical teaching, much less necessary for the restoration of the created order. Therefore, before turning to the nature of the atonement, this study must focus on how one should understand some crucial words or concepts that serve as a foundation for understanding the nature and necessity of Christ's atoning work.

Definitional Differences and the Doctrine of God

Faced with different understandings of what certain words and concepts mean can no doubt feel as if one is at a stalemate. Adjudicating between two positions concerning a definition is no simple task. However, the challenge is at least made clearer when one realizes that there is a singular point of divergence that leads to disagreement over the nature and meaning of righteousness and justice, wrath, and condemnation. That singular point is found in one's doctrine of God, for just as it has been noted that theology is a "coherent whole"⁹ so that each doctrine affects others, this is especially apparent concerning the relationship of one's doctrine of God and one's understanding of the atonement.¹⁰ Indeed, Aulén was correct in noting that it "is in some conception of the nature of God that every doctrine of the atonement has its ultimate ground."¹¹

⁹Goldingay notes, "THERE IS A sense in which no Christian doctrine can be discussed in isolation from all others, for Christian belief is a coherent whole rather than an assembly of unconnected modules" (all caps in original). John Goldingay, "Your Iniquities Have Made a Separation between You and Your God," in *Atonement Today: A Symposium at St. John's College, Nottingham*, ed. John Goldingay (London: SPCK, 1995), 39.

¹⁰That there is a clear connection between one's doctrine of God and one's understanding of the atonement, see John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 88, 109; Stephen E. Witmer, "The Lost Message of *The Lost Message of Jesus*," *Themelios* 31, no. 1 (2005): 66; Steve Chalke, "Cross Purposes," *Christianity* (2004): 44; Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert (London: SPCK, 1950), 29.

John Stott has expanded on Aulén's claim, noting that because the Bible demands a particular view of God and man, so the atonement must reflect this.

We must . . . hold fast to the biblical revelation of the living God who hates evil, is disgusted and angered by it, and refuses ever to come to terms with it. In consequence, we may be sure that, when he searched in his mercy for some way to forgive, cleanse, and accept evil-doers, it was not along the road of moral compromise. . . . If we bring God down to our level and raise ourselves to his, then of course we see no need for a radical salvation, let alone for a radical atonement to secure it. When, on the other hand, we have glimpsed the blinding glory of the holiness of God, and have been so convicted of our sin by the Holy Spirit that we tremble before God and acknowledge what we are, namely "hell-deserving sinners", then and only then does the necessity of the cross appear so obvious that we are astonished we never saw it before.¹²

That is, it is only when one rightly acknowledges the holiness of God and gravity of man's sin that an individual is in position to understand the necessity and nature of the atonement. Where God's majesty and holiness are diminished or God is perceived to be more like man than the unique creator and judge, penal substitutionary atonement will be perceived as extreme and unnecessary. Thus, Stott rightly concludes, "All inadequate doctrines of the atonement are due to inadequate doctrines of God and man."¹³

It is, therefore, the aim of this chapter to show that the denial of the necessity of penal substitution for the restoration of the created order by numerous professing evangelicals is rooted in a faulty understanding of the nature of God and the manner in which he governs the world. However, before examining the manner in which opponents of penal substitution have moved from the traditional understanding of the nature of God and his governance of the world, it is first necessary to examine how God's nature

¹¹Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 29.

¹²Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 109.

¹³Ibid.

(particularly his divine justice, righteousness, judgment, and wrath) has been traditionally understood.¹⁴

A Traditional Understanding of the Nature of God and His Governance of the World

Divine justice and righteousness may be seen as quite similar (and perhaps synonymous) ideas in the Scripture, as the same Greek and Hebrew roots underlie each.¹⁵ The similarity in these terms, however, is not a source of debate. What is at debate is the meaning of God's justice or righteousness. The traditional view of God's righteousness is that it denotes that God always acts in accordance with what is right.¹⁶ However, this does not mean that there is some kind of demand external to God that he necessarily bows to though he might long to do otherwise. Rather, those standards which declare

¹⁴This section of the chapter which explains how the issues of divine justice, righteousness, judgment, and wrath have been traditionally understood will not be defended biblically until later in this chapter. This section is simply descriptive of the traditional understanding.

¹⁵The Hebrew צדק and Greek δικ-terms are typically translated to denote "righteousness" or "justice." The exact translation can alternate between the two, however. Note how the ESV, for example, translates צדק as "righteousness" in Gen 15:6 and as "justice" in Deut 33:21. Similarly, it translates δικαιοσύνη as "justice" in Heb 11:33 and as "righteousness" in Rom 3:21 (English Standard Version [Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2001]). Thus, Wells rightly notes that "Divine justice . . . is essentially the same as God's righteousness." Paul Wells, *Cross Words: The Biblical Doctrine of the Atonement* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2006), 60. See also Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 36; John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, FET (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 345; D. A. Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26: 'God Presented Him as a Propitiation,'" in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frame A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 125; John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 447.

¹⁶See δίκαιος and δικαιοσύνη in BDAG, 246-48; Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 262-98; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 203; Wells, *Cross Words*, 60; Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 446; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 416-17; Herman Bavinck, *God and Creation, Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 2, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 221-28; Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 74-75; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 313-15.

what is right are internal to God,¹⁷ expressions of his own moral character.¹⁸ One should, therefore, not conceive of righteousness as some “general aspect or concept” to which God adheres but as God’s own self-revelation and behavior.¹⁹ God himself is the standard of righteousness, for he *is* righteous.²⁰ Consequently, everything God does is

¹⁷For arguments that the law or standard of righteousness is internal or intrinsic to God, see Garry J. Williams, “The Cross and the Punishment of Sin,” in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 85; Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2007), 301; Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” 77; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 123; Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 446; Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 280; Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 313-15; Wells, *Cross Words*, 60-63; Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 132; Herman Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ, Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 167; Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 345; Oliver D. Crisp, “Divine Retribution: A Defence,” *Sophia* 42:2 (2003): 43.

¹⁸Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 446-49; Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 345; Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” 77; Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26*, NAC, vol. 1B (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005), 228; Crisp, “Divine Retribution,” 43. It is probably best at this point to address those laws which seem less than a clear expression of God’s character (e.g., forbidding the Israelites to eat pork). In determining what laws the Christian is bound to under the new covenant, I do not think it is best to approach the old covenant law with the categories of moral, civil, and ceremonial laws so that one is simply trying to determine which old covenant laws are moral and bind himself to obey those laws. Rather, I think it best to see all the laws of the old covenant fulfilled in Christ and then to see the believer under the “law of Christ” (1 Cor 9:21), the new law of the new covenant (for a new law is necessary when there is a change in the priesthood since the priesthood is the basis for the law – see Paul Ellingworth, *Commentary on Hebrews*, NIGTC [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993], 372-73; D. A. Carson, “The Wrath of God,” in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008], 58). With that said, however, those laws binding upon the believer in the new covenant are, no doubt, those laws which most clearly reflect God’s moral character and, thus, could fit the category of moral laws. Yet one must see these as *a posteriori* categories and not *a priori* categories; otherwise one misses the reason why these laws are binding upon the one under the new covenant. Bruce Ware has compared this to driving 70 mph on I-65 in Tennessee on the basis that this is the speed limit for that same road in Kentucky. One would happen to be doing the right thing (since 70 mph is the speed limit in Tennessee as well) for the wrong reason (private correspondence with Bruce Ware). Those old covenant laws which are not, then, carried over into the new covenant (e.g., not eating pork) were shadowy reflections of God’s moral character and, thus, were fitting standards since they pointed to greater realities and yet were temporary because they were merely shadowy reflections of God’s moral character. See, for example, Col 2:16-17. Frame notes, “God intended some of those secondary laws, like the requirement of animal sacrifice, for the specific situation existing before the coming of Christ. They are no longer literally binding after the final sacrifice of Jesus. But they continue to instruct us about God’s character, telling us what things are of great concern to him.” Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 449-50.

¹⁹Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 406. Frame’s quote actually is in the context of speaking about God’s goodness, but he notes that this same issues could be noted of “righteousness, truth, wisdom, beauty, or any attributes that serves as a model or criterion for the same attributes imaged in creation” (ibid.).

²⁰See, for example, 2 Chr 12:1-6; Pss 7:11; 11:7 119:37; 129:4; Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zeph 3:5.

righteous,²¹ and he acts in accord with what is right simply by acting in accord with his own nature.

According to this traditional understanding, the reason one must acknowledge that righteousness is something intrinsic to God (as opposed to an external standard) is because all reality has its source in God by virtue of his unique nature. He is the creator, while everything else is created. Therefore, since the triune God alone existed prior to creation, God is *a se*.²² That is, he alone is self-existent, self-contained, and independent. He alone is dependent on nothing for his existence while everything else that exists is dependent on him. But God's aseity not only has metaphysical implications but epistemological and ethical implications as well. Because God is *a se*, he is self-attesting and self-justifying.²³ Therefore, truth and moral order both find their source in God.²⁴ Accordingly, man can know truth only because God knows all truth exhaustively (by nature of knowing himself), has revealed truth, and has enabled his image-bearers to

²¹Similarly, because he is holy, all he does is holy, and his holy nature is the basis of his command for his people to be holy. See Lev 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:26; 1 Pet 1:15-16. The problem of circularity will no doubt be brought up when this argument is made. If right is simply that which the righteous God does, then were God to do something currently understood as wicked, it would necessarily be understood as righteous. However, Frame has rightly noted that there is always a kind of circularity present when dealing with anything that is an ultimate source. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 407. Furthermore, individuals should acknowledge that God has proven his consistent goodness and righteousness. For Frame's full argument concerning the issue of circularity, see pp. 405-09.

²²For an elaboration and defense of God's aseity, see Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 239-43; Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 600-16; idem, "Divine Aseity and Apologetics," in *Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics*, ed. K. Scott Oliphant and Lane G. Tipton (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2007), 115-30; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 160-63; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:151-53; A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1993), 256-57.

²³I am dependent on Frame for this point in noting God's aseity not only has implications for metaphysics (i.e., that God is self-existent) but also for epistemology and ethics. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 602.

²⁴Thus Carson notes that the fundamental definition of evil consists in "seeking to establish a moral order on the basis of . . . a denial" of God's existence. D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 425.

comprehend this truth; and every moral right and wrong exists because of its correspondence or lack thereof to God's righteous character.

Additionally, because God is creator and judge, he is not only the standard of righteousness but is himself the one who upholds the moral order he has instituted in the world. "As a result there are rules that define good and evil acts and stipulate rewards and punishment for those who obey or disobey, and God enforces those rules as judge over all."²⁵ Thus, God declares as "guilty" those who violate his commands and will not ignore the sins of the wicked but gives them the punishment they deserve. That is to say, one aspect of God's righteousness is retributive, meaning that were God to extend mercy to guilty individuals without inflicting punishment, he would go against his own righteous nature, which he has revealed in the Scripture.²⁶ This retributive punishment, however, should not be understood as stemming from God acting on an angry whim but as the necessary response of divine justice.²⁷ Were God not to punish sin, it would mean that he is less than righteous,²⁸ and were God to do other than what is right, he would fail

²⁵Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 346.

²⁶Crisp describes this as the "strong divine justice claim" whereas he labels the notion that justice does not *require* forgiveness to be a weaker view of justice. Crisp, "Divine Retribution," 43.

²⁷Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, CCT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 124-27; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:161-67; Paul Helm, *The Providence of God*, CCT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 213; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 204; Bruce A. Ware, *God's Greater Glory: The Exalted God of Scripture and the Christian Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 152; Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 78-79; Crisp, "Divine Retribution," 35-52; Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 190.

²⁸Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 204; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 127; John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.5.7, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, LCC, vols. 20-21 (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 60. Lincoln notes, "When God's righteousness meets human unrighteousness, his righteous judgment is revealed not as salvation but as wrath." Andrew T. Lincoln, "From Wrath to Justification: Tradition, Gospel and Audience in the Theology of Romans 1:18-4:25," SBLSP 32 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993), 202. This understanding is strongly ridiculed by Green and Baker (*Recovering the Scandal*, 142-50) as they assess Charles Hodge's articulation of penal substitution in

to uphold the moral order of right and wrong he has instituted in the world.²⁹ Therefore, the moral order of the world not only finds its source in God but is upheld by God's righteous judgment.

It should then be clear that believing God's righteousness to denote that God always acts in accord with his own righteous nature (including punishing the guilty) is not a peripheral affirmation but is foundational to a Christian worldview (which understands God as the source of all that is). Because of this, it is a gross caricature of the traditional understanding of God's justice to say that those holding to penal substitution "set a law above the character of God."³⁰ Rather, by recognizing God's commitment to those right standards which are revealed by him, proponents of penal substitution are merely acknowledging God as the source of all reality. All that he has revealed of himself, including his actions as judge in which he punishes the wicked, serves as the basis for what is right. However, this traditional understanding of God and his governance of the world has not gone unchallenged, and one source of attack has come from those professing evangelicals currently denying penal substitution.

Arguments of Those Denying Penal Substitution

With Aulén's accurate observation that one's understanding of the atonement is rooted in one's doctrine of God, it should come as no surprise to find that opponents of

which he suggests that God's justice "demands the punishment of sin" adding that God's justice "renders it necessary that . . . the wicked [be] punished" (Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999], 2:488-90).

²⁹Helm, *The Providence of God*, 213; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:163; Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 346.

³⁰Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 101.

penal substitution have departed from this traditional understanding of God and his governance of the world. Particularly they have adopted alternate understandings of God's justice, righteousness, judgment, and wrath. To understand why this is necessarily so, one need only look again at what individuals are denying when they deny penal substitution. As noted earlier, Schreiner has provided a good definition of penal substitution, writing,

The Father, because of his love for human beings, sent his Son (who offered himself willingly and gladly) to satisfy God's justice, so that Christ took the place of sinners. The punishment and penalty we deserved was laid on Jesus Christ instead of us, so that in the cross both God's holiness and love are manifested.³¹

Similarly, Bruce Demarest defines penal substitution, writing, "On the cross Christ took our place and bore the equivalent punishment for our sins, thereby satisfying the just demands of the law and appeasing God's wrath."³²

Placing the two definitions together, one is able to see the crucial elements that are accounted for in penal substitution. Aside from the clear note of substitution³³ both definitions speak of "justice" or "just demands," "punishment" or "penalty," and "wrath."

³¹Thomas R. Schreiner. "Penal Substitution View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 67.

³²Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, FET (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 159.

³³Multiple critics of penal substitution have no problem with the idea that Christ served as a substitute for mankind. See, for example, Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 58-60, 165-69; Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 98; Steve Chalke, "The Redemption of the Cross," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 37; Mark D. Baker, "Contextualizing the Scandal of the Cross," in *Proclaiming the Scandal of the Cross: Contemporary Images of the Atonement*, ed. Mark D. Baker (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 25-26. Critiques against penal substitution from those authors noted in this chapter are typically focused on the penalty or punishment Christ is said to bear from the Father, the understanding of God's wrath, and the notion of justice (especially retributive justice), which will be shown below. Therefore, it is penal aspect of penal substitutionary atonement that will drive the focus of this chapter.

These elements, which concern the nature of God and his governance of the world, highlight a crucial point of division between those affirming and those denying penal substitution. Therefore, this chapter will now turn to an examination of how opponents of penal substitution define these terms.

Justice, Righteousness, and Retribution

The consistent understanding of God's righteousness from those opposing penal substitution is that it refers to God's faithfulness in keeping his covenant obligations to his people,³⁴ specifically manifested in restoring them and forgiving their sins.³⁵ Christopher Marshall's description is helpful:

³⁴The opponents of penal substitution examined in this chapter are heavily dependent on the "new perspective" on Paul. On the new perspective (both for and against), see E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977); N. T. Wright, "New Perspectives on Paul," in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 243-64; idem, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); James D. G. Dunn, "The New Perspective on Paul," in *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 89-110; idem, "The Justice of God: A Renewed Perspective on Justification by Faith," in *The New Perspective on Paul: Collected Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 187-205; idem, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 334-89; Guy Prentiss Waters, *Justification and the New Perspectives on Paul: A Review and Response* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2004); D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomsim*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005); Peter Stuhlmacher, *Revisiting Paul's Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001); Simon J. Gathercole, *Where Is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1-5* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); John Piper, *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007); Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The "Lutheran" Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

³⁵Green notes, "In the OT 'the righteousness of God' is a central affirmation, affirming God's faithful orientation toward the covenant. . . . The righteousness of God is manifest in his intervention to bring salvation to a humanity mired in sin." Green, "Death of Christ," 206. See also Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 49-67; Baker, "Contextualizing the Scandal," 35; Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 87; Carroll and Green, "The Death of Jesus," 122; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, 147. Pinnock and Weaver do not clearly define righteousness and justice in these terms but deny any need for "justice" to be appeased through retribution for God to save and stress that God is committed to saving his people. See Clark H. Pinnock and Robert C. Brow, *Unbounded Love: A Good News Theology for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 100-01; 104; J. Denny Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 195-204. Additionally, Travis sees occasions where righteousness can mean God's commitment to do what is right, which is manifested "sometimes [by imposing] retributive punishment," but denies this sense of retribution when depicting what happens at the

God is “righteous” inasmuch as God fulfills the obligations he took upon himself to be Israel’s God. These included rescuing Israel in times of need, forgiving her sins, and defending the righteous of the poor and weak within Israel’s own borders. . . . The Divine King is righteous because he intervenes to save those who cannot save themselves, thus proving his faithfulness to covenant commitments. . . . God’s righteousness is characteristically associated in the Hebrew Scriptures with God’s love and grace . . . generosity, forgiveness, and liberation. God’s justice and God’s mercy stand, significantly, in parallel, not in opposition.³⁶

Thus, far from signifying some obligation God must uphold that might hinder his forgiving people of their sins,³⁷ God’s righteousness expresses the divine commitment to fulfill his covenant promises, manifested most clearly in his intervention to bring salvation to his sinful people.³⁸

It should then be apparent that the idea of retributive justice according to this line of thinking is something of an oxymoron.³⁹ The concept of retributive justice entails

cross and sees “righteousness” in Romans 3:25-26, for example, as referring to God’s covenant faithfulness. Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 191-94, 200.

³⁶Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 49-50.

³⁷In an unpublished manuscript, Robin Collins attacks an understanding of the atonement that claims that Christ’s death “paid the penalty demanded by divine justice, for our sins” through a barbed re-creation of the parable of the prodigal son. Collins writes, “Eventually he returned to his father, saying, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me one of your hired servants.’ But his father responded: ‘I cannot simply forgive you for what you have done, not even so much as to make you one of my hired men. . . . Simply to forgive you would be to trivialize sin; it would be against the moral order of the entire universe. . . . Such is the severity of my justice that reconciliation will not be made unless the penalty is utterly paid. My wrath—my avenging justice—must be placated.” The above quotes come from an unpublished manuscript by Robin Collins, “Understanding Atonement: A New and Orthodox Theory,” 1995, [on-line]; accessed 5 August 2009; available from http://home.messiah.edu/~rcollins/Philosophical%20Theology/Atonement/AT7.HTM#N_2_ (emphasis original). Collins notes that this paper is a work in progress. Green and Baker quote the re-creation of the parable of the prodigal son by Collins as a legitimate critique of the concept of retributive punishment underlying penal substitution. Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 147-48.

³⁸Green, “Death of Christ,” 206. Though Green sees God’s righteousness as “effective in the present to save,” he does see righteousness manifested in a different sense at final judgment as he notes that on the day of judgment those who resist God’s righteousness in this life will “experience God’s righteousness as condemnation.” It is difficult to imagine then how Green finds it possible to define so narrowly the righteousness of God as “God’s faithful orientation toward the covenant” (*ibid*) and to mock the notion that it refers to that which stands as an obstacle to the wicked being justified (Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 147).

that God is “duty bound by [his] own righteous character to punish wrongdoers and thus uphold the moral order [he] has created.”⁴⁰ If God’s righteousness, however, is narrowly defined in terms of faithfulness to a commitment to restore and forgive his people, then such a notion is impossible to comprehend. How could the *righteousness* of God mandate punishment and stand opposed to forgiveness? One must remember that according to the understanding of righteousness given above, “God’s justice and God’s mercy stand . . . in parallel, not in opposition.”⁴¹ Divine retribution, however, signals a demand that serves as an obstacle to God showing mercy to the guilty.

Therefore, those opposing penal substitution reject the notion that somehow God’s justice binds him to punish the evil doer or stands in the way of forgiveness being offered by God to the sinner.⁴² Having no concept of such an obstacle within God, they dismiss this idea as external⁴³ to God and more akin to a Western legal tradition⁴⁴ than to

³⁹Travis appears at first to be somewhat of an exception here because he does note that God’s judgment does have an element of retribution, but then goes on to make retribution so peripheral as to be non-existent. Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 185-86. See also n. 8, above, concerning how Travis declares that he does not eliminate the notion of penal substitution altogether only to dismiss the possibility that God punishes Jesus as a substitute for the punishment that should have come to God’s sinful people.

⁴⁰Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 44.

⁴¹Ibid., 50.

⁴²See Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 91-104; Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 35-95; Travis, “Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment,” 332-45; Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*, 264; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 95; Weaver, *A Nonviolent Atonement*, 2, 195-204; Pinnock and Brow, *Unbounded Love*, 101-04.

⁴³Green and Baker write, “Within a penal substitution model, God’s ability to love and relate to human is circumscribed by something *outside* of God—that is, an abstract concept of justice instructs God as to how God must behave.” Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 147 (emphasis added). See also Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 101; Pinnock and Brow, *Unbounded Love*, 104.

⁴⁴Pinnock and Brow, *Unbounded Love*, 100-01; Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 43; Weaver, *A Nonviolent Atonement*, 2, 195-204; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 169.

the character and nature of God as revealed in the Bible. Green and Baker derisively assert that proponents of penal substitution present “a God who wants to be in relationship with us but is forced to deal with a problem of legal bookkeeping that blocks that relationship . . . a God who . . . finds it much easier to punish than to forgive.”⁴⁵ One can, therefore, see in this mocking of penal substitution an understanding of righteousness that removes any notion of a demand that God condemn the wicked and pour out on them the punishment they deserve.

Mark Baker has described this difference in understanding the concept of God’s justice or righteousness as a difference reflected in Hebraic versus Western legal thought. He writes,

Through the lens of a Western legal system, anyone is just who meets the standard of the law. But a Hebraic understanding of justice is more relational: anyone is just who keeps one’s covenants and commitments to others. Hence, we could say that God is considered just not because of meeting a standard that says a penalty is required [i.e., retributive justice], but because God is faithful to his covenantal promise to provide salvation to Israel and through Israel to the world.⁴⁶

Therefore, rejecting the nature of God’s justice as somehow demanding that God mete out punishment on the evildoer, justice is understood as God’s faithfulness in keeping his covenant obligations to his people, specifically manifested in restoring them and forgiving them as they are mired in sin.

The Wrath of God

Do those holding to this understanding of divine righteousness, then, believe that sinners face God’s wrath? All opponents of penal substitution surveyed in this

⁴⁵Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 147.

⁴⁶Baker, “Contextualizing the Scandal,” 35.

chapter would answer this question affirmatively. God indeed reveals his wrath against evildoers. This issue at stake, however, is how one understands God's wrath. And an examination of the understanding of God's wrath by those opposing penal substitution reveals that for God to direct his wrath against sinners simply means that he gives them over to live their lives apart from him and to suffer the natural⁴⁷ consequences of their sins.⁴⁸ That is, divine wrath is not an externally-imposed punishment from God to match the sin but an "intrinsic, self-imposed judgement"⁴⁹ wherein the sinner faces the natural consequences flowing from the sin itself.⁵⁰

Such an understanding is not meant to remove God from his wrath, however, so as to make divine wrath an altogether impersonal concept but to set apart this understanding of wrath from the notion of divine punishment which is inflicted by God from outside of human life.⁵¹ This denial that God inflicts punishment externally is an

⁴⁷The notion that God's wrath is comprised of sinners facing the natural consequences of their sins was put forth by C. H. Dodd almost eighty years ago, as he described God's wrath as "the inevitable process of cause and effect in a moral universe." C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), 23.

⁴⁸Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 45-68 (esp. 65); Travis, "Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment," 332-45; Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 91-104; Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus*, 256-79; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 54-55; Pinnock and Brow, *Unbounded Love*, 104; Weaver, *A Nonviolent Atonement*, 78.

⁴⁹Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 211.

⁵⁰Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 91-93.

⁵¹Those generally following the description of God's wrath put forth by Dodd seem more careful than he was to ensure that their readers do not mistakenly think such judgment is outside of God's hands but rather part of the moral universe which God carefully put in place. Travis specifically warns his readers not to assume that God is not responsible for men bearing the consequences of their sins. Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 211. Similarly, Green writes, "Nor am I identifying wrath with an impersonal set of rules of the game of the universe, as though by doing so one might segregate God from wrath." Green, "Must We Imagine?," 163. Similarly, see Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 93. Therefore, "natural" denotes not the complete absence of God but that that divine wrath is tied to that which is worked out in God's ordered world. However, Williams has rightly noted that according to this understanding of divine wrath, "for sin to receive its punishment, God has to do nothing other than sustain the existence of the world which he has created." Williams, "The Cross and the Punishment of Sin," 96.

attempt to deny that God's wrath is retributive. This is especially clear in the writings of Stephen Travis, who defines retribution as "a penalty which is inflicted on the offender *from outside*, not intrinsically 'built into' the acts to which it is attached; and to imply some *correspondence* or equivalence between punishment and the deed which has evoked it."⁵² After having defined retribution in this way, Travis attempts to show that God's wrath is an "intrinsic" judgment, flowing from the consequences of one's sin, and because it is intrinsic, it should not be understood as retributive. Therefore, according to this line of thinking, divine wrath is an intrinsic self-imposed judgment wherein God gives the sinner over to his desires⁵³ so that, as Green consistently notes, "'Letting us go our own way' constitutes God's wrath."⁵⁴

⁵²Travis, "Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment," 333. One can then see why though Travis might nod his cap to the concept of penal substitution, he must redefine it in such a way that it no longer denotes God inflicting punishment externally on his Son who serves as a substitute for sinners. His understanding of wrath simply leaves no room for such external punishment being inflicted by God to the sinner.

⁵³Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 92.

⁵⁴Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 55; Green, "Must We Imagine?," 163; similarly, idem, "Kaleidoscopic Response," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 112-13. Green argues that in *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*, he and Mark Baker were not trying "to develop a theology of divine wrath but rather to explain God's wrath as this is represented in Romans 1" (Green, "Kaleidoscopic Response," 112). The problem, however, is that though this allows Green a consistent escape from the criticism that he views wrath in a reductionistic manner (as I will argue in this chapter), Green never expands on his apparent fuller understanding of God's wrath. Instead of arguing for a fuller understanding of God's wrath, Green consistently limits himself to expounding how wrath is portrayed in Rom 1 (see Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 53-55; Green, "Must We Imagine?," 162-64; idem, "Death of Christ," 206; Carroll and Green, 122-25), yet he sees his exposition of this admitted narrow focus on God's wrath in Rom 1 as sufficient grounds for denying the atonement as that event in which Christ appeases God's justice by bearing God's punishment for sin as our substitute. Green's development of his argument is apparent because so much of his writing contains an expansion of his previous writings. Thus, in his article on the "Death of Christ" in the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, which was published in 1993, Green claims, "The wrath of God is not vindictive indignation or the anger of divine retribution" (Green, "Death of Christ," 206). However, in his contributing chapter to the 2008 publication of *The Atonement Debate*, Green alters this sentence a bit, writing, "The wrath of God *here* is neither vindictive indignation nor the anger of divine contribution" (Green, "Must We Imagine?," 163 [emphasis added]), thus limiting his claim to the text "here" examined (i.e., Rom 1). This growing admission that his focus is a narrow one, however, has led to no adjustments concerning his criticism of penal substitution, and the reader is left to conclude that though Green notes that he has only focused narrowly on Rom 1 in his writings, there is no fuller

The Nature of the Atonement

If justice and righteousness signify God's covenant faithfulness to restore his people and forgive their sins, divine retribution is a concept that is rejected as unbiblical,⁵⁵ and divine wrath is simply God handing the sinner over to face the natural consequences of his or her sin, then how do opponents of penal substitution understand the nature of the atonement? There is no single answer to this question as if there is a clear and obvious alternative to penal substitution. Moreover, the authors themselves make note that there are multiple metaphors used to describe the nature of the atonement.⁵⁶ What all opponents of penal substitution agree on, however, is that the atonement was not an act whereby divine justice was satisfied as the Father inflicted the punishment that should have come to guilty sinners upon his righteous Son.

Even when employing the metaphor of sacrifice in understanding the atonement, these authors distance themselves from the concept of penal substitution. Some understand the metaphor of sacrifice to denote that by his death Jesus undergoes the consequences of sin as man's representative so that he absorbs and exhausts those consequences⁵⁷ and so frees sinners from facing them (affirming along the way that such

understanding of God's wrath, for any explanation of the nature of God's wrath comes solely from his focus on Rom 1 while citing a few others texts in parentheses.

⁵⁵Again, Travis proves to be an apparent exception here because he recognizes retribution on occasion in his revised and updated work, but he consistently notes that it is not the center of the atonement, is "sparse" in the New Testament, and that Christ was not punished by God in the place of humanity. Therefore, though Travis would no doubt say that he most certainly does not reject the notion of divine retribution altogether, he effectively eliminates it from the cross when noting that Christ is not punished by God in the place of humanity. Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 194-200.

⁵⁶Carroll and Green, for example, note that "Paul uses an almost inexhaustible series of metaphors to represent the significance of Jesus' death" before adding "and penal substitution . . . is not one of them." Carroll and Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity*, 263. See also Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 58; Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 196.

consequences are not inflicted by God as punishment but the outworking of sins' consequences in this life). Travis explains this understanding of Christ's work as he argues against the notion of retributive punishment:

Rather than saying that in his death Christ experienced retributive punishment on behalf of humanity, Paul says that he entered into and bore on our behalf the destructive consequences of sin. . . . In so doing he absorbed and exhausted them, so that they should not fall on us. It is both true and important to say that he 'was judged in our place'—that he experienced divine judgment on sin in the sense that he endured the God-ordained consequences of human sinfulness. But this is not the same as to say that he bore our punishment. . . . Judgment is not inflicted by God "from outside," but is the intrinsic outworking, under God's control, of the consequences of human choices and actions. . . . The meaning of the cross is that in Christ God himself took responsibility for the world's evil and absorbed its consequences into himself. He was not punishing his Son in order to avoid punishing his creatures. . . . Rather we may speak of him "absorbing the cost" of remaking our relationship with him.⁵⁷

Therefore, though Jesus endures the consequences for man's sin on the cross ("divine judgment," according to Travis), this is not to be confused with Jesus bearing punishment which God inflicts externally.

⁵⁷Travis, "Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment," 333-45; Marshall, *Beyond Retribution*, 62-64; Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 91-92; Pinnock and Brow, *Unbounded Love*, 104. It is difficult to articulate J. Denny Weaver's understanding of the metaphor of sacrifice in explaining the atonement because he comes close to denying it by noting the negative views of some of the prophets toward the sacrifices of God's people in the Old Testament. However, he ultimately seems to identify Jesus' sacrifice as undergoing the consequences of men's sins in identification with the sinners' slavery to the power of death so that he becomes a victim to death's reign even as they themselves are victims so that they might be freed to live a life of absolute surrender (Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 58-66). Weaver relies heavily on Schwager, whose understanding of the metaphor of sacrifice in Jesus' death loosely fits the description above (Raymund Schwager, *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation* [New York: Crossroad, 1999], 177-91). Also, though Fiddes regularly speaks of Christ as coming to suffer the consequences of man's sin, he also seems to suggest at points that Jesus' death is unnecessary for the forgiveness of sinners. Thus, he writes, "In discussing the place of justice and judgement within atonement, a fundamental decision about perspective has to be taken: is the wrath of God a judgement inflicted from outside human life, or God's consent to the natural consequence of human sin from within? If it is the latter, as I have been arguing, then God is free to forgive those who repent." Fiddes then goes on to say that the difficulty is in getting humans to come to their right minds. Therefore, he notes, "Actual human sons do not just come to themselves; they have to be fetched, and this means that God must himself take a journey into the far country" (Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 101-02). Thus, Fiddes seems to suggest that Christ's death is merely necessary to help human sons "come to themselves" instead of continuing in their stubborn rebellion, and, therefore, eliminates any objective accomplishment of the atonement.

⁵⁸Travis, "Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment," 344-45.

Others argue that Christ's death is not focused on the consequences of sins but on sin itself.⁵⁹ Relying on Dunn's interpretation of Old Testament sacrifice,⁶⁰ Green, for example, argues that just as the sin offering was identified with the sinner *qua sinner* so that when the offering was destroyed so sin was destroyed, in the same way, Christ became sin so that he might destroy sin through his own death.⁶¹ Therefore, because sin is destroyed through Jesus' sacrifice, man is cleansed from sin and no longer in rebellion against God. Such an understanding of the atonement which focuses on man and not on God is intentional, for Green notes, "What is needed . . . is not a transformation of God's disposition toward the unrighteous and the ungodly but rather a transformation on the human side of the equation."⁶² Thus, by removing man's pollution and rebellion through the atoning work of Christ which destroys sin, man's disposition toward God is altered, and man is reconciled to his Maker.⁶³

In their understanding of the nature of the atoning death of Christ, the opponents of penal substitution bring their findings together. Because God is righteous,

⁵⁹These categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive as multiple opponents of penal substitution each describe Christ's death as sacrifice in a variety of ways.

⁶⁰For Dunn's full argument concerning the nature of Old Testament sacrifice, see James D. G. Dunn, "Paul's Understanding of the Death of Jesus as Sacrifice," in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S. W. Sykes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 43-48.

⁶¹Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 63-65; Green, "Must We Imagine?," 161-64. See also Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 196-97.

⁶²Green, "Must We Imagine?," 163-64.

⁶³It is difficult to piece together the precise outcome of Christ's death as sacrifice in Green's thought. However, two elements lead to the conclusion that Green sees the end result being that because man is cleansed of sin he is no longer against God. The first is that Green references Goldingay's claim that what was dealt with in sacrifice was the stain or pollution of sin (Green, "Must We Imagine?," 161; John Goldingay, "Your Iniquities Have Made a Separation between You and Your God," 39-53 (esp. 51)). The second is Green's comment that God, not man, is the aim of the atonement, since what is needed is a "transformation of the human side of the equation." Green, "Must We Imagine?," 163-64.

he seeks to atone for man's sin and so sends his Son into the world to die on the cross. Then, through his death, Jesus bears the intrinsic outworking of the God-ordained consequences for sin or destroys sin by absorbing it in himself and dying. In either case, the metaphor of sacrifice should not be understood to denote that the Father is personally inflicting punishment on his Son in order to avoid giving sinful humanity their just penalty.

It should, therefore, be clear that explaining the sacrifice of Christ in such a way as to deny penal substitution is rooted in a certain understanding of God and his governance of the world. If divine righteousness does not require the satisfaction of God's just demands whereby he personally inflicts retributive punishment (wrath) on the guilty, then the atonement will not be understood as penal substitution.⁶⁴

But will this understanding of God and his governance of human affairs (specifically concerning the nature of his justice/righteousness and wrath) hold up under the scrutiny of the biblical text? The argument of this chapter is that it will not. An

⁶⁴For, as noted in the beginning of this chapter, penal substitution claims that Christ bears the punishment for our sins in our place so that God might justify us. Weaver acknowledges this certain connection between retributive justice and penal substitution, writing, "The link between satisfaction atonement [under which he places penal substitution] and systems of retributive justice cannot be denied." Weaver, *The Nonviolent Atonement*, 3. It bears saying that the concept of penal substitution will be denied while the terminology itself may be held, just as Travis does not dismiss "penal substitution" while openly stating that the "meaning of the cross is not that God punished his Son in order to avoid punishing humanity." Travis, *Christ and the Judgment of God*, 195-96, 200. One notable exception to this is N. T. Wright. Wright defines righteousness as covenant faithfulness and even understands it in that sense in Rom 3:25-26. However, he sees punitive justice as a necessary component of covenant faithfulness and, therefore, continues to articulate a doctrine of penal substitution, even noting God's anger against sin falling on Jesus. Thus, commenting on Rom 3:25-26, he writes, "In particular, God had passed over, that is, left unpunished, acts of sin committed in former times. God, it seems . . . had been forbearing, patient, unwilling to foreclose on the human race in general or Israel in particular. . . . The first question at issue, then—the aspect of God's righteousness that might seem to have been called into question and is now demonstrated after all—is God's proper dealing with sins—i.e., punishment. Whatever Paul is saying in the first half of v. 25, it must be such as to lead to the conclusion that now, at last, God has punished sins as they deserved." N. T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 2002), 472-73, 476. See also N. T. Wright, *Paul for Everyone: Romans Part One* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 57-59.

examination of the biblical text will show that Scripture demands a fuller understanding of God's righteousness, justice, judgment, and wrath.

A Scriptural Examination of the Nature of God and His Governance of the World

A biblical portrait of God and his governance of the world reveals a different picture than that which is portrayed in the writings of those opposing penal substitution. This section will show that this understanding of righteousness is reductionistic in light of the biblical evidence, that righteousness cannot be defined in a way so as to exclude retribution, that the standards of justice are intrinsic to God, and that the articulation of wrath in such a way so as to eliminate God inflicting punishment "from the outside" is insufficient to account for the numerous examples of God's judgment in Scripture.

Righteousness Language and Its Creational Context

It is no secret that the understanding of God's righteousness as his covenant faithfulness has also been expressed by proponents of the "new perspective" on Paul. Two leading proponents of the new perspective, Wright and Dunn, both define "righteousness" in these terms.⁶⁵ But such claims have not come without response. One of those responding to the "new perspective," Mark Seifrid, has suggested that "righteousness" language in the Scripture is tied in the first instance to God's ordering of creation rather than to his covenant with Israel. He argues that grounding righteousness

⁶⁵Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 100-11; idem, *Romans*, 403-06; Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle*, 340-46; idem, "The Justice of God," 16-17. Dunn credits Hermann Cremer with first exposing this understanding of righteousness in his publication of *Die paulinische Rechtfertigungslehre im Zusammenhange ihrer geschichtlichen Voraussetzungen* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1900). Ibid., 16.

and social justice in the covenant misses God's prior commitment to secure the "good and beneficial order of creation."⁶⁶ He notes,

For the biblical writers, the demand for social justice derives from God, the divine king, who has determined to secure the good and beneficial order of creation. We might more properly say that the biblical writers again and again anticipate God's intervening to reinstate right order in a world in which evil for a season prevails.⁶⁷

That is, when the biblical writers long for justice, their desire is not rooted in that which was first revealed in the covenant but in God's revelation of himself at creation.

Seifrid supports his claim by noting the tie between language of righteousness and judgment while pointing out the notable absence of a tie between language of righteousness and the covenant. He shows that righteousness language is more often found in parallel with those terms expressing opposition to and condemnation of evil rather than terms expressing covenant faithfulness. Specifically, his study reveals that despite the high frequency of their usage in the Old Testament, only rarely do *בריה* and *צדק*-terms appear in close proximity while *צדק* and *שפט*-terminology are found together with remarkable regularity.⁶⁸ If righteousness can be defined solely as covenant

⁶⁶Mark A. Seifrid, "Righteous Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 1, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 424, 426.

⁶⁷Ibid., 426.

⁶⁸Seifrid's research has shown that though *בריה* occurs 283 times and *צדק*-terminology some 524 times in the Hebrew Scriptures, "yet in only seven passages do the terms come into any significant semantic contact." He notes, "Making generous allowance, we may point to Isa 42:6; 61:8-11; Hos 2:16-20; Ps 50:1-6; 111:1-10; Dan 9:4-7; Neh 9:32-33" (ibid., 423 n. 40). However, he notes that *צדק* and *שפט*-terminology comes in close proximity in 142 contexts (425).

Similarly, Westerholm has noted that Paul never links "the vocabulary of 'righteousness' with the mention of 'the' (or even *a*) covenant," and that while Proverbs uses righteousness language with much greater frequency than any other biblical book, the framework of the book is "emphatically *not* covenantal." Thus, he concludes, "For a significant strand of Hebrew literature, then, what human beings . . . ought and ought not to do is discussed using the language of righteousness in a completely *noncovenantal* framework" (Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, 286-88 emphasis original). Perhaps here Westerholm overstates his case, however. It is fair and helpful to note that Paul speaks of

faithfulness, this linguistic evidence is quite surprising. However, if righteousness is revealed prior to and is rooted in something other than God's covenant with Israel (and if it denotes God's commitment to what is right), these linguistic findings are expected.

Again, one should keep in mind that the goal of those holding to a traditional understanding of righteousness is not to show that "righteousness" does not denote covenant faithfulness; it is simply to show that it refers to a broader category. The burden is on those wanting to shift from this traditional understanding to show that righteousness excludes elements broader than covenant faithfulness, such as retribution. But the linguistic evidence simply will not aid their cause. Where one would think linguistic connections would be made, Seifrid has shown that these ties are nearly altogether lacking. Thus, one would need to look to other avenues than the lexical evidence to show this.

Again, this is not to suggest that divine righteousness is in no way demonstrated through God's faithfulness to his covenant promises. To assume this would be to drive a wedge where Scripture will not allow. If God acts righteously by acting in accord with his own nature, surely one manifestation of this is seen in his faithfulness to his covenant promises. The relationship between God and his people in the Scripture is one in which God freely binds himself to an undeserving people who could make no such demand of him and graciously promises them blessing.⁶⁹ It is,

"righteousness" without reference to a specific covenant, but to note that Proverbs is emphatically not covenantal is too great a claim since Proverbs serves as a book of wisdom to guide God's covenant people in wise living. Thwarting the reductionistic claims of those adherents of the new perspective does not require one eliminating the notion of covenant faithfulness from "righteousness" but merely showing that righteousness is a broader term.

therefore, not uncommon to find instances in which the Lord's people delight in God's judgments by proclaiming his covenant faithfulness.⁷⁰ Moreover, one of those covenant promises comes in the form of a commitment by God to forgive the iniquities of his people and remember their sins no more (Jer 31:34). Therefore, it is right and biblical to declare that God's righteousness is demonstrated in the fulfillment of his covenant promise to forgive the sins of his people through the work of Christ.

But, as Seifrid's linguistic study suggests, to conclude on this basis that divine righteousness denotes *merely* covenant faithfulness would be to commit a similar error as excluding the notion of covenant faithfulness altogether. It is reductionistic and fails to account for the biblical evidence. It is better to conclude, with Seifrid, that all "covenant-keeping" is righteous behavior, but not all righteous behavior is 'covenant-keeping.'" Therefore, it seems, based on the linguistic evidence, that it is misleading to speak of God's righteousness *as* his covenant faithfulness.⁷¹

That "righteousness" denotes more than covenant faithfulness is evident from more than linguistic studies alone, however. The biblical storyline continually speaks of righteousness in line with the traditional understanding that it refers to that which is right and not merely as God's faithfulness to his covenant promises. Furthermore, the biblical evidence demands that one not exclude the notion of retribution from an understanding of divine righteousness. Therefore, this chapter will now turn to an examination of some

⁶⁹Edmund P. Clowney, "The Biblical Doctrine of Justification by Faith," in *Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (London: World Evangelical Fellowship, 1992), 26.

⁷⁰See, for example, Pss 77; 89; 105; 106; 111.

⁷¹Seifrid, "Righteous Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism," 424.

biblical texts that demand a fuller understanding of divine righteousness, including the element of retribution.⁷²

A Biblical Examination of Righteousness, Judgment, and Retribution

The biblical plotline does not progress very far before the reader is told that God is the righteous judge over all things. In Genesis 18, God comes to Abraham to inform him that he will destroy Sodom. Therefore, Abraham intercedes for the city, asking the Lord not to destroy its inhabitants if there are righteous people in it, for he is taken back by the thought that the Lord might “sweep away the righteous with the wicked” (Gen 18:23). Ultimately, Abraham declares, “Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” (Gen 18:25).

Abraham’s question reveals two important truths. The first of these is that Abraham perceives the Lord in legal categories.⁷³ He sees God not simply as the Creator or Savior but as “the Judge of all the earth.” Though Abraham reveals his surprise at the Lord’s declaration, his hesitation does not stem from the thought God declares individuals righteous or guilty and rewards or punishes them accordingly. This is clearly assumed in his mind. Second, it is obvious that Abraham expects the Lord to judge the

⁷²This survey is by no means exhaustive, for such an examination would require a full-length study focused solely on this issue. Rather, the aim will be to survey a few texts that illustrate that the Bible requires a broader understanding of the concepts of “righteousness” and “justice” than that put forth by opponents of penal substitution examined earlier. Even a few examples where divine righteousness or justice demands a definition broader than covenant faithfulness should be sufficient in showing that though God’s faithfulness to his covenant obligations may represent even a large portion of God’s manifestation of his righteousness, it cannot be defined solely as covenant faithfulness.

⁷³Rightly, Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 253.

earth in accord with a standard of rightness or justice.⁷⁴ It is against this assumed expectation that he declares, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is *just*?”

This belief that God must act in accord with a standard of righteousness or justice might seem insignificant, but this very affirmation has drawn charges that proponents of penal substitution have created a standard to which God must bow.⁷⁵ Clearly, however, to proclaim that God must act in a certain manner is not the creation of those advocating penal substitution but something assumed as early as Genesis 18:25 and something which Abraham would only have known through God’s self-revelation.

Most importantly, however, this text reveals the seeming impossibility of divine righteousness denoting only God’s covenant faithfulness. In order to assume that Abraham appeals to God’s covenant faithfulness by asking, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?,” those for whom Abraham is interceding would need to be the recipients of God’s covenant promises. Westerholm has noted, however, that this is not the case:

⁷⁴Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, WBC, vol. 2 (Dallas: Word Books, 1994), 52; Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26, 228-30*; Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 18-50*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 25. It is actually too weak to say that “Abraham expects God to judge the earth in accord with some standard of rightness or justice” because Abraham proclaims twice in this verse “Far be it” (חַלְלֵהָ) which Mathews notes “conveys repulsion at the thought of breaching an oath or a code of conduct.” Mathews continues, “By such an exclamation, the person calls upon the Lord implicitly or explicitly . . . to censure him if he fails. In this verses the patriarch appeals to the Lord to censure himself, if he ‘kills[s] the righteous’! In the same vein, Elihu defends the integrity of God by the exclamation ‘Far be it . . . from God . . . to do evil . . . for the Almighty . . . to do wrong . . .’ (Job 34:10).” Mathews, *Genesis 11:27-50:26, 229*.

⁷⁵Fiddes, for example, writes that a theory “of legal satisfaction . . . conceives justice as law with ultimate authority; even when the law is said to be God’s own law, the theory still requires God to act in a way which is confined by legal restraints. Law has ceased to be a useful guideline to the purpose of God for his creatures, and has become a supreme principle. It does not allow God the freedom to exercise a justice of another kind” (Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation*, 101). Additionally, when describing the expression of God’s love in sending Jesus to die on the cross, Pinnock and Brow write, “This is not the picture of a God who is bound by justice.” Pinnock and Brow, *Unbounded Love*, 104; see also Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 147.

According to Genesis 18, the judgment that loomed over Sodom would have been avoided had its people included but ten who were “righteous” (18:23-32)—inasmuch as God, the judge of all the earth would not have destroyed the “righteous” (people of Sodom) together with their wicked neighbors (18:25). Righteousness for the people of Sodom was a life-and-death issue, but the citizens were part of no covenant.⁷⁶

If Abraham’s intercession is for the citizens of Sodom and on their behalf he appeals for God to do what is just, then his appeal cannot be based on God’s covenant faithfulness toward them. However, if divine justice denotes the broader category of God acting in accord with what is right, then Abraham’s question makes perfect sense. He does not think it *right* that the righteous and wicked receive the same judgment, and it is on that basis that he asks, “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” Thus, Genesis 18 seems to affirm that “righteousness” denotes something broader than God’s covenant faithfulness. Nor is Genesis 18 an exception in this regard.

Another place in which this narrow understanding of divine righteousness falters is Exodus 34:6-7. The importance of these verses is shown in their repetition throughout the rest of the Old Testament,⁷⁷ as it is here that God reveals his very name and nature to Moses. Thus, Moberly appropriately recognizes the crucial nature of these verses in developing one’s doctrine of God:

This is the fullest depiction of the name and nature of God within the whole Bible (Old and New Testaments together); the words are clearly set on the lips of YHWH Himself, thereby indicating the divinely-given origin of their content . . . the setting is the foundational holy context of Mt Sinai, where Israel receives its definitive *torah* and self-understanding as the people of YHWH.”⁷⁸

⁷⁶Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*, 288.

⁷⁷Old Testament references to these verses include 2 Chr 30:9; Neh 9:17; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah 1:3.

⁷⁸R. W. L. Moberly, “How May We Speak of God? A Reconsideration of the Nature of Biblical Theology,” *TynBul* 53, no. 2 (2002): 193 (emphasis original).

Exodus 32-34 forms the context for these verses as the Israelites had formed the golden calf (Exod 32:6-7), the Lord had declared to Moses that he would consume them (Exod 32:7-10), and Moses had interceded for the people before God (Exod 32:30-35). The Lord ultimately responds to Moses' prayer, allowing the people to continue and ultimately allowing his presence to dwell in their midst. In the midst of this dialogue between Moses and the Lord, however, Moses asks the Lord to reveal his ways and show his glory (Exod 33:13, 18), and the Lord responds, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name, 'The Lord'" (Exod 33:19). Paul House helpfully explains the nature of Moses' request:

In 34:1-5 Yahweh accedes to this intercessory request. He will forgive the people. He will not destroy them and start over with Moses. But why does he do so? On what basis does he forgive, punish or seemingly do nothing? The answers to these questions are crucial, since they indicate the bases upon which the Israel-Yahweh relationship, which is likely to be marred by sin in the future, may be restored. It also gets to the heart of how Israel may understand how Yahweh acts. Is he unstable? Is he capricious? Or are there some bedrock qualities to his character?⁷⁹

This is the setting, then, for these two important verses, and it is here that God reveals to his people the nature of his character and his name.

As the Lord reveals himself to Moses in these verses, he proclaims, "The LORD, the LORD,⁸⁰ a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." To this point, no one would hesitate to affirm that these aspects of God's character are the clear revelation of his very nature. However, the Lord

⁷⁹Paul R. House, "God's Character and the Wholeness of Scripture," *SBET* 23, no. 1 (2005): 5.

⁸⁰Kaiser notes that the repetition of the divine name is repeated "perhaps to emphasize his unchangeableness." Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Exodus*, in vol. 2 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 486.

continues, showing a fuller understanding of his nature and ways, as he declares, “. . . but who will by no means clear the guilty.”⁸¹

According to these verses, there is a two-fold aspect to God’s nature. God is both merciful and righteousness. Hafemann rightly concludes, “God is both compassionate and patient with his people, yet he will not compromise his own righteousness by disregarding their sin.”⁸² God’s people have been beneficiaries of his mercy and compassion, but they must not think he is one who turns a blind eye to sin.⁸³ They must know that for him to treat as innocent those who are guilty would be a violation of his own name and nature. Such an action would destroy the foundation upon which he had formed his people.⁸⁴ This is what God reveals to his people as he declares

⁸¹Ryken has commented, “This is probably where we would like to stop, with all the divine attributes that we love to praise: gracious compassion, faithful love, patient forgiveness. However, this is not where God stopped, and we must not stop before he does. God concluded his sermon on the divine attributes by making a strong affirmation of his *justice*: ‘Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished.’” Phillip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 1045-46. Ironically, however, this *is* where Green and Baker stop. In commenting on Exod 34:6-7, Green and Baker examine the attributes of God in these verses without attempting to explain the phrase “yet by no means clearing the guilty.” In what might be perceived as an explanation of this phrase, the authors turn their attention in the next section to “Human Sin and the Wrath of God.” However, they narrowly limit themselves to Paul’s use of wrath in Rom 1 and, thus, fail to articulate their understanding of this phrase from Exod 34:6-7. Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 51-58.

⁸²Scott J. Hafemann, *Paul, Moses, and the History of Israel: The Letter/Spirit Contrast and the Argument from Scripture in 2 Corinthians 3* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1995), 217.

⁸³Berthoud notes, “The Lord adds abruptly that the positive divine attributes are not signs of weakness and do not imply a *perversion of justice*. He ‘will by no means clear the guilty.’” Pierre Berthoud, “The Compassion of God: Exodus 34:5-9 in the Light of Exodus 32-34,” in *Engaging the Doctrine of God: Contemporary Protestant Perspectives*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 164 (emphasis added). Cassuto says almost exactly the same thing in his commentary. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967), 440. That this aspect of God’s nature revealed in Exodus 34:7 is his righteousness or justice that entails God will not let the guilty go unpunished (in addition to Berthoud and Cussuto), see Kaiser, *Exodus*, 486; Ryken, *Exodus*, 1045-46; Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, NAC, vol. 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2006), 717; Peter Enns, *Exodus*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 585.

⁸⁴Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, 457. See also House, “God’s Character and the Wholeness of Scripture,” 7.

himself to be one who will by no means clear the guilty. God's own people must understand that their hope for justification cannot rest in the thought that he might decide to ignore or overlook their guilt.

This commitment within God whereby he refuses to acquit the guilty but pours out on them the punishment they deserve is precisely what is meant by God's retributive justice. Therefore, though God's righteousness is manifested in his faithfulness to his covenant promises, to limit divine justice to this while excluding the notion of retribution is to ignore the very self-disclosure of God to his people in Exodus 34:6-7.

Nor is this revelation that God will not acquit the guilty unique, even in the book of Exodus. In Exodus 22-23, God lays out what divine justice is to look like among his people. Specifically, in Exodus 23:7, God commands the people, "You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in his lawsuit. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not acquit the guilty." Thus, God's people are forbidden to kill the innocent and righteous person. But what is to prevent them from such a perversion of justice? It is God's very nature that serves as deterrence to their disobedience, as God reminds them that he will not acquit the guilty. Should the Israelites pervert justice, their punishment would be certain. They cannot imagine that God might somehow ignore their sin, for he has revealed that his very nature is such that will not do that. Thus, again God reminds them that their hope for justification cannot rest in him overlooking their guilt.

A similar note is seen as God commands those acting as judges to imitate his own righteous judgment. He demands of them that they acquit the innocent and condemn the guilty. Deuteronomy 25:1-2 reads,

If there is a dispute between men and they come into a court and the judges decide between them, acquitting the innocent and condemning the guilty, then if the guilty man deserves to be beaten, the judge shall cause him to lie down and be beaten in his presence with a number of stripes in proportion to his offense.

If retribution were a notion deserving of mockery, it is hard to imagine that the Lord would refuse to allow his judges to acquit the guilty. One might respond by suggesting that though God commands them to condemn and punish the guilty, he would be honored by the action of a judge who saw beyond the demands of the Mosaic code and reflected God's heart by forgiving and acquitting one who should be condemned. Proverbs 17:15 quickly removes that option, however. There, the Lord declares, "He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the LORD." Therefore, just as the Lord demands that the righteous one is justified, so he demands that the guilty one is condemned. And anyone who would dare justify the ungodly man can know in no uncertain terms that his action is detested by God.

This examination of a few Old Testament texts reveals a God whose very nature is such that he will not clear the guilty and finds such a practice so abhorrent that the one who justifies the wicked is an abomination to him.⁸⁵ These verses alone are sufficient to show that righteousness must denote something broader than covenant faithfulness and must include the notion of retribution. But such an understanding of God's righteousness does not rest on the basis of the Old Testament alone. The New Testament also demands a fuller understanding of God's righteousness which includes a

⁸⁵It is helpful to be reminded at this point that one "benefit" opponents of penal substitution have drawn from understanding righteousness as covenant faithfulness is that this (in their minds) eliminates the idea that there could be an obstacle to God forgiving sinners. Green and Baker have mocked the notion that God might find it difficult to forgive (*Recovering the Scandal*, 147). It is difficult to imagine, then, how they might handle these texts.

commitment to punish the guilty.

In Acts 17, Paul addresses the men of Athens on the Areopagus and declares to them in verses 30-31, “The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed . . . raising him from the dead.” As one would expect in light of a traditional understanding of divine righteousness, this text again brings together the concepts of righteousness and judgment. Here Paul uses “righteousness” to describe the nature of God’s coming judgment. What, then, does Paul intend to communicate by proclaiming that the Lord will judge the world “in righteousness?”

When one considers that in Paul’s earlier sermon in Acts 13, he exhorts those hearing to believe lest they face God’s judgment,⁸⁶ the most obvious purpose for noting that God will judge the world in “righteousness” in this text is to remind them that their sin and guilt will not be ignored. Thus, the reason Paul gives for men to repent is because God will judge the world in righteousness, which he would have understood to entail that

⁸⁶In Acts 13:38-40, Paul says, “Let it be known to you therefore, brothers, that through this man forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest what is said in the Prophets should come about: ‘Look, you scoffers, be astounded and perish; for I am doing a work in your days, a work that you will not believe, even if one tells it to you.’” A couple of things need to be noted about these verses. First, that from which the law could not free anyone should be understood as condemnation. Paul makes clear in Gal 2:16 that “by works of the law no one will be justified.” Therefore, though the law is powerless to justify (which includes removing a verdict of condemnation), Paul is saying in this text that through belief in Christ one may be justified. Second, the quote from Hab 1:5 in context is a quote that announces the Lord’s coming judgment. That which will astound them and the work that God is doing in their day is that he is judging his people through the hands of the Chaldeans. Therefore, by exhorting the people to believe, lest what the Prophets foretold might become true of them, Paul is telling them to believe lest they face divine judgment even as God once carried out through the hands of the Chaldeans in Habakkuk’s day.

those who are guilty will by no means be acquitted.⁸⁷ That is why Paul contrasts the times of ignorance with the coming judgment.⁸⁸ Should righteousness only be understood as God's faithfulness to his covenant promises in this text, the contrast with God overlooking men's sin would make little sense and the motivation to repent would be greatly weakened. However, if righteousness denotes in this text that which it denoted in the Old Testament (i.e., that which includes God's commitment not to acquit the guilty), then the identification of coming judgment as that done "in righteousness" would declare to Paul's audience that no one may place the hope for justification in the notion that God might overlook guilt. To overlook sin would be contrary to the very nature of God revealed in Exodus 34:7.

Even in this brief survey, the evidence is weighty in showing that one cannot reduce righteousness so as to eliminate the notion of retribution. However, one might attempt to combat the tide by suggesting that for God not to acquit the guilty simply means pronouncing them condemned without implying subsequent punishment. But Scripture will not allow this option, as condemnation is consistently followed by punishment in the Bible. Matthew 25:41-46 reveals, for example, that Jesus will not only pronounce the guilt of those who never cared for the least of his brothers, but he will declare, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his

⁸⁷That this reference to righteous judgment refers to the divine exercise of retributive justice, "inflicting . . . the punishment deserved," see Horatio B. Hackett, "The Discourse of Paul at Athens: A Commentary on Acts 17:16-34," *BSTR* 6, no. 22 (1849): 354-55.

⁸⁸I. Howard Marshall, *The Book of the Acts*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 340-41; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Acts: The Spirit, the Church & the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 287-88; contra Pervo, who seems to suggest that Paul is telling his audience that "God is willing to overlook their extended ignorance" if only they will have a change of heart. Interestingly, however, Pervo goes on to note that "With the promise implied in repentance comes an implied threat." Richard I. Pervo, *Acts, Hermeneia* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009), 440.

angels” (25:41), which he notes is “eternal punishment” (κόλασιν αἰώνιον, 24:46).

The fact that this punishment is retributive is also repeatedly noted in the New Testament. Aside from the witness of Matthew 25, one of the clearest pictures of retributive justice is seen in 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9. There, Paul writes,

This is evidence of the *righteous judgment of God*, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed *God considers it just to repay with affliction* those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, *inflicting vengeance* on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the *punishment* of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.⁸⁹

Thus, God’s righteous judgment involves inflicting punishment and vengeance on those “who do not obey the gospel,” and God considers it to be just as he repays them according to their wicked acts. Similarly, in Romans 2:5-8, Paul declares,

But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up *wrath* for yourself on the *day of wrath* when *God's righteous judgment* will be revealed. *He will render to each one according to his works*: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be *wrath and fury*.

In this text, it is again God’s *righteous* judgment that will result in his meting out punishment on those who are guilty, and the punishment is according to what each has merited.

Finally, there are several texts in the book of Revelation in which the author makes clear that God’s judgment of the wicked is retributive, as the guilty receive the

⁸⁹Gaffin notes that the “punishment in view here is plainly retributive.” Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus: ‘The Scandal of the Cross,’” in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frame A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 152. In like manner, Schreiner writes concerning this verse, “It is clear that the judgment God inflicts is retributive.” Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” 79.

punishment they deserve. A sampling of these texts reveals the consistent refrain that God's judgments are just and righteous as he metes out punishment according to what each has merited.⁹⁰

And I heard the angel in charge of the waters say, "Just are you, O Holy One, who is and who was, for you brought these judgments. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink. It is what they deserve!" And I heard the altar saying, "Yes, Lord God the Almighty, true and just are your judgments." (Rev 16:5-7)

After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, crying out, "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just; for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality, and has avenged on her the blood of his servants." Once more they cried out, "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up forever and ever." (Rev 19:1-3)

And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. (Rev 20:12-15)

Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay everyone for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. . . . I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (Rev 22:12-13, 18-19)⁹¹

⁹⁰Schreiner has noted that each of these texts support the notion of divine retribution. Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 79.

⁹¹Therefore, again, since each is getting the punishment according to his or her works (i.e., what they justly deserve), God's wrath should not be confused with an arbitrary or capricious uncontrolled anger but a judicial and holy response to sin. So Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 131-132; Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 180; Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 80; idem, *Romans*, 191; Gaffin, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 151-53; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:162; John R. W. Stott, *Romans: God's Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 115.

Therefore, though the biblical witness does nothing to remove the notion that divine righteousness is manifested in God's faithfulness to his covenant commitments, nor does it allow one to reduce divine justice to entail God's covenant faithfulness alone. Rather, the Bible demands a fuller understanding of righteousness, including a retributive aspect whereby God inflicts punishment upon those who stand guilty before him in accord with his very nature.

An Intrinsic Standard

So far it has been shown that to define righteousness as covenant faithfulness is reductionistic, since the biblical text requires a broader understanding which includes divine retribution. It will now be shown that the differences in understanding these terms reveal contrary positions concerning one's doctrine of God. That is, these differences do not reflect disagreement over some impersonal concepts but over the very nature of God himself. The reason this is the case is because divine righteousness (including retributive justice) is not a mere concept to which God adheres but an expression of his very nature.

In accordance with the traditional understanding of divine righteousness, Scripture confirms that God is *a se*. He is dependent upon nothing outside of himself. Paul concludes his argument in Romans 9-11 by proclaiming, "For from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom 11:36), thus, making clear that there is nothing that finds its source outside of God. Additionally, Paul proclaims to those on the Aeropagus that "the God who made the world and everything in it . . . is [not] served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:24-25). The rest of Scripture as well speaks with one voice that

there is nothing outside of God on which he is dependent.⁹² Therefore, the biblical portrait of God allows no charge that he depends on some external standard of righteousness to which he adheres.⁹³ Rather, the Bible declares that such a standard must come from God himself.

By means of showing the intrinsic nature of God's righteousness, Scripture also declares that righteousness and justice are not merely characteristic of what God *does* but of who he *is*. Throughout the Bible, God is spoken of as "righteous."⁹⁴ He is the "righteous God" (Is 45:21), "righteous judge"⁹⁵ (Ps 7:11), the "just and upright" God (Deut 32:4), and Jesus is called "the Righteous One" (Acts 22:14). The weight of such declarations is best seen in light of a development of the doctrine of simplicity.⁹⁶

⁹²See, for example, Ps 50; John 5:26; that God depends on no one for counsel or power, see Job 42:2; Ps 115:3; Dan 4:35; Rom 9:15-16; Eph 1:5, 9, 11; Rev 4:11.

⁹³This, of course, is agreed upon by both opponents and proponents of penal substitution. However, it is a necessary point to make since the charge against those holding to a traditional understanding of righteousness is that they are demanding that God measure up to a standard outside of himself. Therefore, having shown that God indeed acts in accord with what is right, it is also important to affirm again that God depends on nothing outside of himself. These two notions of God's aseity and righteous character are both necessary to refute this caricature of righteousness from those opposing penal substitution.

⁹⁴John Feinberg provides the following list of biblical references declaring God as righteous: Exod 9:27; 2 Chr 12:6; Ezra 9:15; Neh 9:8; Job 4:17; 35:2; 36:3; Pss 5:8; 31:1; 33:5; 40:10; 45:4, 7; 69:27; 71:2, 19; 89:16; 111:3; 116:5; 119:123; 143:1; 145:7, 17; Prov 2:9; 15:9; Isa 46:13; 51:6, 8; 53:11; 54:17; 59:16, 17; Jer 23:5; Lam 1:18; Dan 9:7, 16; Hos 2:19; Zeph 3:5; Zech 8:8; 9:9. Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 345-46.

⁹⁵Interestingly, the psalmist seems to link God's righteous judgment with his indignation as he writes, "God is a righteous judge, and a God who feels indignation every day" (Ps 7:11). God's righteous judgment throughout the psalm is picture in acquitting the righteous and pouring out his wrath on the wicked.

⁹⁶For an elaboration and defense of divine simplicity, see Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 225-30; William Mann, "Divine Simplicity," *RelS* 18, no. 4 (1982): 451-71; Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Absolute Simplicity," *Faith and Philosophy* 2, no. 4 (1985): 353-82. For arguments against divine simplicity, see Thomas V. Morris, "Dependence and Divine Simplicity," *IJPR* 23, no. 3 (1988): 161-74; Feinberg, *No One Like Him*, 325-37. Feinberg makes clear, however, that he does not think that aseity depends on simplicity and affirms that righteousness is intrinsic to God's essence. Muller contends that much of the denial of divine simplicity stems from misunderstanding of exactly what divine simplicity

Frame's development of this thought deserves to be quoted at length:

Consider how Scripture sometimes employs the language of divine attributes: "God is spirit" (John 4:24); "God is light" (1 John 1:5); "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). These expressions state what God really and truly is. In other words, they describe his essence, not merely what he happens to be on some occasions. But note that there are three of these attributions, not just one. So God's essence can be described in three different ways. I would say that these expressions describe the whole divine essence from three different perspectives.⁹⁷

That is, God is in his essence spirit, light, and love. However, Frame's conclusions also hold true concerning God's righteousness. To be the "Righteous God" (Is 45:21) is a description of God's very essence and can mean nothing less than that he is righteous in all he does and at all times, for he *is* "just and upright" (Deut 32:4). In all that he does, God does not cease to be anything that he *is*, and because he is righteous, all that he does is righteous. Therefore, God's nature being such that he will by no means acquit the guilty means that such a commitment is rooted in God's very essence and can in no way be understood as an external standard on which he depends and to which he bows.

When God, then, responds to sin in wrath, it is the personal response of a holy God whose very nature is such that he is not indulgent but indignant in the face of human rebellion.⁹⁸ It is not, after all, some concept of righteousness that is violated by human sin so that God is merely administering a system a justice.⁹⁹ He himself is always the

claims. See Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003).

⁹⁷Frame, *Doctrine of God*, 228.

⁹⁸I am borrowing here from Stott (*The Cross of Christ*, 110), who writes, "If we reinterpret sin as a lapse instead of a rebellion, and God as indulgent instead of indignant, then naturally the cross appears superfluous."

⁹⁹Carson, "The Wrath of God," 45.

offended party, and his wrath is the personal and principled response of the holy God.¹⁰⁰

Therefore, to have an inadequate understanding of righteousness (in which retributive justice is denied) is to have an inadequate understanding of God himself. It should not be surprising, then, to find that even the articulation of divine wrath by opponents of penal substitution fails to measure up in light of the biblical text.

A Biblical Examination of Wrath

As has already been witnessed in many of the texts referenced in this chapter, the Scripture does not allow one to define God's wrath in such a way that it is limited to "the intrinsic outworking, under God's control, of the consequences of human choices and actions."¹⁰¹ It is difficult to begin to comprehend how one might understand the eternal punishment of fire (as the "goats" taste God's furious wrath) as the intrinsic outworking of one's choices and actions. Nor, is it possible to imagine being *thrown* into a lake of fire as God merely allowing one to go his own way.¹⁰² However, a picture of God's wrath contrary to the portrait upheld by opponents of penal substitution is not formed from a few isolated texts, for Scripture is neither silent nor limited in its references to divine wrath. Leon Morris has noted that words denoting God's wrath

¹⁰⁰Therefore, wrath should not be understood as itself an attribute of God but an expression of God's holiness. In this way, it is correct to say that God's love and wrath are not equal. Prior to the creation, God did not exhibit wrath but he did exhibit love and holiness. Divine wrath is only present when sin (and/or evil) is present.

¹⁰¹Travis, "Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment," 345.

¹⁰²No doubt there is a sense in which men have chosen for themselves the punishment they deserve. In numerous cases, humanity is very clear in understanding that their sin merits God's eternal punishment, and they still refuse to repent. In other cases, though men might not receive verbal warning of the punishment that awaits those who refuse to bow the knee to Christ, these might suppress the truth in their unrighteousness (Rom 1:18-20) and implicitly invite divine punishment, whatever its nature. However, to reduce eternal punishment to the notion of letting one go his own way is not a faithful description of the judgment that awaits those outside of Christ.

occur over 580 times in the Old Testament alone.¹⁰³ Moreover, the consistent witness of the biblical text demands a picture of God's wrath wherein he personally inflicts punishment on the sinner.¹⁰⁴

In the garden of Eden, God threatens Adam with the judicial penalty of death if he should eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:17).¹⁰⁵ Then, after Adam defies the divine prohibition, God drives the couple out of the garden. As the Bible describes this account, the language of Genesis 3:23-24 eliminates any possibility that Adam is simply left to undergo the intrinsic outworking of the consequences of his sin. Rather, the text declares that God "sent him out from the garden. . . . He drove out the man, and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim and a flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life" (Gen 3:23-24).¹⁰⁶ One can in no way conceive of God's wrath in this text as merely letting Adam go his own way and facing the consequences of sin. Adam did not eat of the tree and as a consequence wander out of the garden; God *drove* the couple from their home.

Only a few chapters later, God floods the entire world as judgment against man's sin (Gen 6-7). The text reads, "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was

¹⁰³Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 150.

¹⁰⁴This is not to say that God's wrath is not manifested through his giving people over to their desires. Paul does proclaim that such is a manifestation of God's wrath in Rom 1:18-21. However, the following examples will show that it is impossible to limiting one's understanding of divine wrath to this.

¹⁰⁵See chap. 2. That death is the judicial penalty for man's sin, see Gaffin, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 151-52; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 65; Simon J. Gathercole, "Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3:21-4:25," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 179.

¹⁰⁶Gathercole rightly notes, "Adam and Eve are not merely victims of the natural consequences of their sin; rather God is presented as actively expelling them from the garden." Gathercole, "Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood," 172.

great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . So the Lord said, ‘I will blot out man whom I have created from the face of the land’” (Gen 6:5-7). Again, this leaves no room to picture the flood as the intrinsic outworking of the consequences of man’s actions as if somehow the world functions so that the quantity of sin from mankind is directly proportional to the quantity of moisture in the clouds above. Rather, the flood is pictured as God’s personal response of punishment for man’s sin.¹⁰⁷ The divine response to man’s guilt is to send forth such a constant and consistent downpour of rain that all mankind outside of the ark drown as the rising tide of water fills their lungs. There is nothing about this horrible picture of judgment that leads one to consider that God is merely allowing man to go his own way and face the natural outworking of his sin.

Then, in the early chapters of Exodus, God pours out his wrath on the Egyptians for their sin against his people. Garry Williams rightly notes, “The plagues, as far as I am aware, did not just happen according to the biological processes. It wasn’t just a good year for frogs, gnats, flies and locusts, let alone for the death of firstborn children.”¹⁰⁸ To see the plagues as men facing the natural consequences of their actions demands that one come to the text with a prior commitment to this view, for nothing within this account leads to such a conclusion.

Similarly, as noted in chapter two of this study, the Lord’s response to the

¹⁰⁷Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” 80. Williams adds, “The act of punishment shows that it is as far as it could be from the idea of a mechanism. . . . The act of punishment entails a holy God directly confronting the sinner.” Williams, “The Cross and the Punishment of Sin,” 90.

¹⁰⁸Garry J. Williams, “Justice, Law, and Guilt – EA Symposium on Penal Substitution” [online]; accessed 24 March 2008; available from http://www.oakhill.ac.uk/resources/pdfs/garry_williams.pdf; Internet. It is also hard to imagine the parting of the sea only to come crashing down on the Egyptians as somehow the natural consequences of sin.

people's covenant violations in Deuteronomy 29:22-28 is personal and fierce.¹⁰⁹ These verses do not provide a picture wherein God allows nature to take its course. Rather, the Lord declares that the judgment on the people will be like that of Sodom and Gomorrah which he "overthrew in his anger and wrath" (v. 23). The people of Israel will not consequently wander off into exile but the Lord will uproot them in his "anger and fury and great wrath, and cast them into another land" (v. 28). Therefore, should the people wonder if the Lord would willingly allow them to go into exile, the answer must be given negatively. He will not *allow* them to go into another land; he will *cast* them into another land.¹¹⁰ The Lord's judgment is clearly his violent and personal response in which he pours out his anger, fury, and wrath in judgment.

Finally, in 2 Samuel 6:5-9, as David moved the ark contrary to the Lord's instructions so that Uzzah reached up and touched the ark when one of the oxen stumbled, the text reads: "And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God" (2 Sam 6:7). How is the moral ordering of the world such that steadying a box of wood with one's hand results in the consequence of immediate death? A similar question could be asked with the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). The obvious answer is that these instances are not a reflection of the natural consequences of man's sin within God's ordered world but reveal the personal and fierce response of a God who externally

¹⁰⁹As noted in chap. 2, Craigie appropriately sees God's judgment in these verses as that of retribution. Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 359.

¹¹⁰Similarly, it should be noted in Rev 20:15 that those whose names are not found in the book of life will be "thrown" into the lake of fire. Therefore, the question concerning whether God will truly allow people to go to hell in the end should be answered by noting that "allow" communicates too weakly the notion that he will throw the wicked into the lake of fire. The Bible simply will not allow the Lord's personal and wrathful response to sin to be ignored, regardless of how uncomfortable we may be with it.

inflicts punishment on sinners. The individuals in the account themselves understand this, for in both cases the people feared the Lord himself (2 Sam 6:9; Acts 5:11), recognizing that he had inflicted punishment on those who had violated his commands.

Such Scriptural examples of God personally inflicting wrathful punishment on the guilty could be multiplied.¹¹¹ However, these few examples highlight the impossibility of conceiving of God's wrath merely as letting people go their own way and facing the intrinsic outworking, under God's control, of the consequences of sinful choices and actions.¹¹² God's wrath no doubt is demonstrated in man reaping the consequences of his sins,¹¹³ but Scripture insists that God's wrath is also manifested as he personally inflicts punishment on the sinner "externally."¹¹⁴

Conclusion

A survey of the biblical evidence demands a fuller picture of God's justice, righteousness, judgment, and wrath than that put forth by the opponents of penal substitution examined in this chapter. The biblical testimony indeed confirms that God's righteousness is expressed in his faithfulness to his covenant promises and that his wrath

¹¹¹For a more thorough survey of God's wrath in the Scripture, see Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 147-54, 179-84.

¹¹²Sometimes God's wrath is pictured in terms of God giving people over to their desires, as is witnessed in Rom 1:18. However, to limit one's understanding of divine wrath to such a notion is to ignore much of Scripture and to provide a reductionistic understanding of God's punishment of sin. Williams rightly refers to this reductionistic understanding of wrath as "moral naturalism." Williams, "The Cross and the Punishment of Sin," 95-97.

¹¹³For example, both Prov 26:27 and 28:10 speak of the wicked falling into the very pit that they have dug.

¹¹⁴Williams notes in another place, "Left to itself [much punishment in Scripture] would not happen to the world. Much punishment in Scripture is irrefragably extrinsic." Garry J. Williams, "Penal Substitution: A Response to Recent Criticisms," *JETS* 50, no. 1 (2007): 75.

is sometimes revealed in giving people over to their sins and allowing them to face the consequences of those sins. But to define divine righteousness merely as covenant faithfulness and wrath merely as God's act of giving people over to the intrinsic outworking of the consequences of their choices and actions is reductionistic in light of the scriptural witness to the very nature of God. For this reason, an inadequate understanding of divine righteousness, judgment, and wrath reveals an inadequate understanding of God.

The biblical portrait of God and his governance of the world is one in which God is judge of all things and rules justly over creation. He rules justly not because he is constrained by something outside of himself but because in all things and at all times God acts in accord with his righteous character and name. As one who is just and righteous, he will always do what is just and right. One aspect of this justice is demonstrated in the commitment not to clear the guilty but to pour out his wrath on them as their deserved punishment. To do otherwise would be to violate God's own name. Furthermore, to compound the issue, the Bible does not present only a few men as guilty and therefore justly under the wrath of the God. Rather, Paul argues in Romans 1:18-3:20 that every man without exception is sinful, guilty, and justly under God's wrath.¹¹⁵ Indeed, all individuals are born into such a state that they are "by nature children of wrath" (Eph 2:3).

¹¹⁵That this is a argument of Rom 1:18-3:20, see John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 34-35; Schreiner, *Romans*, 178; idem, "Penal Substitution View," 87; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 92; Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 119-21; Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 198-200; Rohintan K. Mody, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement in Paul: An Exegetical Study of Romans 3:25-26," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 120; Lincoln, "From Wrath to Justification," 196; Gathercole, "Justified by Faith," 175; Wells, *Cross Words*, 74.

Therefore, in examining the biblical portrait of God and his governance of the world, one finds that the necessity of removing the verdict of condemnation from men is matched with the seeming impossibility of doing so. Because God is the righteous and just judge over a world full of guilty and condemned people, the question is not why God might find it difficult to forgive “but how he finds it *possible* to do so at all.”¹¹⁶ If God declares that his justice is displayed in not acquitting the guilty but in meting out on them the punishment they deserve, how is God able to justify anyone as the judge of all the earth and still remain just? It is he, after all, who declares that the one who justifies the wicked is an abomination (Prov 17:15). As one considers God’s loving and merciful desire to justify the guilty, the question Abraham asked demands repeating: “Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?” This question can only be answered by looking to the cross—the focus of the next chapter.

¹¹⁶Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 88 (emphasis original).

CHAPTER 4

DEALING WITH CONDEMNATION IN THE CROSS: THE NEED FOR PENAL SUBSTITUTION

Introduction

Thus far it has been shown that the plight of the created order is rooted in the legal standing of those individuals who inhabit the earth.¹ Because Adam was condemned (and all mankind in him, Rom 5:18) and ushered in a reign of death (Rom 5:14, 17), now the created order is itself subject to the tyranny of death and decay (Rom 8:20-21). Therefore, if the created order is to be freed from its “bondage to corruption” and “obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom 8:21), the verdict of condemnation that falls upon man must be removed. Such a notion is more easily stated than accomplished, however, for (as the previous chapter revealed) the nature of God is such that he “will by no means clear the guilty” (Exod 34:7) and finds the one who “justifies the wicked” to be an “abomination” (Prov 17:15). Furthermore, the Scripture states in no uncertain terms that all humanity is guilty of violating the Lord’s commands, as it reveals that all are evil (Matt 7:11),² “have sinned” (Rom 3:23),³ and are “by nature

¹By this I do not mean as opposed to those individuals who do not inhabit the earth, but rather am simply reflecting that the earth suffers because of the condemnation of its inhabitants, as was shown in chapter 2 of this study. Mic 7:13 is yet another example of this reality, as the Scripture reads, “But the earth will be desolate because of its inhabitants, for the fruit of their deeds.”

²Carson rightly notes that “Jesus presupposes the sinfulness . . . of human nature. . . but implicitly acknowledges that this does not mean all human beings are as bad as they could be or utterly evil in all they do.” D. A. Carson, *Matthew: Chapters 1-12*, EBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 187.

children of wrath” (Eph 2:3).⁴ How is it, then, possible that God might justify anyone without compromising his righteous nature and doing the very thing he declares an abomination? “How is it possible for the righteous God to declare the unrighteous to be righteous without either compromising his righteousness or condoning their unrighteousness?”⁵

That the unrighteous are justified by God is not in doubt. While Scripture presents the divine judge as one “who will by no means clear the guilty” (Exod 34:7), it also reveals him to be one “who justifies the ungodly” (Rom 5). Paul even combines man’s guilt and justification in one sentence, writing, “All have sinned . . . and are justified” (Rom 3:23-24). Therefore, the question is not whether God justifies the ungodly, declaring righteous those who are sinners. That he does so is certain. The question, rather, centers on *how* God is able to do this. And the answer to this question is found in the atoning work of Christ.⁶

The Primacy of the Cross and Penal Substitution

The suggestion that man’s hope for righteousness is tied to the cross is hardly surprising, as the connection between the atonement and justification is revealed

³Paul also notes a few verses earlier that “none is righteous” (Rom 3:10).

⁴Lest one want to reduce the scope of “we” in Paul’s statement that “we all once lived in the passions of our flesh . . . and were by nature children of wrath,” he adds, “like the rest of mankind” (Eph 2:3).

⁵John R. W. Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News for the World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 112.

⁶That the answer to man’s justification is found in the atoning work of Christ is clear from the verses quoted in Rom 3:23-24. After writing that “all have sinned . . . and are justified,” Paul adds, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Thus, the logic of the text is that all have sinned and yet are justified on the basis of the redemption that has come through the work of Christ.

repeatedly in the Scripture.⁷ Nor are those who oppose penal substitution on some crusade against the cross holding a place of prominence in evangelicalism.⁸ On the contrary, Green and Baker, for example, see their efforts to dislodge penal substitution from its favored status⁹ as a means to recover the centrality of the atonement among evangelicals.¹⁰

⁷It has been noted above that this connection between justification and atonement is present in Rom 3:24, but it is noted in other places in Paul's letters as well. Paul, for example, notes that we are "justified by his blood" (Rom 5:9), that "one act of righteousness leads to justification" (Rom 5:18). Commentators agree that this "act of righteousness" references at minimum the atoning work of Christ. See, for example, James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1988), 284; Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 344; Schreiner, *Romans*, 287; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 289; Brendan Byrne, S. J., *Romans*, Sacra Pagina (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1996), 181; Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), 271; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Columbus, OH: Wartburg, 1945), 381; Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 385. Wright seems unclear on precisely what he considers the exact nature of the obedience of Christ in 5:18, noting that it "refers to his obedience to God's commission . . . to bring salvation to the world," but he earlier notes that Jesus' obedience "awakens echoes both linguistic and theological from Isaiah 53" which focuses the reader on "Jesus' obedient death." N. T. Wright, *The Letter to the Romans*, in vol. 10 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck et al. (Nashville: Abingdon, 202), 525-29.

⁸Though Green and Baker *do* strongly attack the centrality of the justification of individuals in the Lord's soteriological purposes. This is already apparent from Green in his attack noted in chapter one of this study as he wonders how a model of the atonement which focuses "on the individual, on a forensic judgment, and on the moment of justification" serves the purpose of God which "will be actualized in the restoration of all things" (Joel B. Green, "Must We Imagine the Atonement in Penal Substitutionary Terms? Questions, Caveats, and a Plea," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008], 166). But it is also clear in Green and Baker's co-authored work in which they write, "Justification by faith, as traditionally understood, refers to a legal transaction: the manifestly guilty person stands before the divine judge for sentencing and hears the verdict, 'Not guilty!' Penal substitutionary atonement provides a workable foundation for this soteriology, making this atonement theory all the more palatable or inviting." Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament & Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000).

Interestingly, Green and Baker recognize that if man's problem is his guilt before God, then the obvious solution to the problem is an atonement that deals with the justification of individuals. In further support of this connection between justification and the atonement, one should note that in a book which is primarily focused on a defense of penal substitution, Leon Morris devotes two chapters to the issue of justification (Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965], 251-98). I am indebted to Aaron O'Kelley on this note concerning Morris's book.

⁹It perhaps bears repeating that Green and Baker are not against all forms of an understanding of the atonement that might be labeled by some as "penal substitution" but are against the traditional understanding of these terms, denoting that the Son willingly appeases the wrath of the Father (who lovingly sent his Son) by receiving on the cross the punishment deserved by guilty humanity.

However, if one understands that man's guilt before his Maker is humanity's fundamental problem, then it is not sufficient simply to rest in knowing that a majority (if not all) of professing evangelicals understand the primacy of the cross in the Christian message. If the gospel is good news, then it must be a proclamation of how God has addressed the reality that all people stand condemned before a righteous judge "who will by no means clear the guilty" (Exod 34:7). That is, the atonement must be understood and articulated in such a way that it addresses humanity's fundamental problem of guilt before God.¹¹ Otherwise, to call the apostolic message "good news" is a misnomer. It is

¹⁰This is reflected in the title of their work together: *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross*. They believe that if man's fundamental problem is presented in terms of guilt before God and the cross is presented in terms of providing a solution to that problem, then the cross will not make sense in a culture where guilt is not fundamental to society. They argue, for example, that in Japan the cross needs to be portrayed as "removing alienating shame" since this it is shame and not guilt that is associated with sin in that culture. Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 153-70.

Green and Baker's assumption that a culture is unable to understand guilt seems naïve at best (and outright deceitful at worst). After all, Paul argues that even those without the law "show that the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus" (Rom 2:15-16). Furthermore, even if it were true that certain cultures do not think in biblical categories, should this highlight anything other than the church's responsibility to go forth and teach a Christian worldview, developing biblical categories in men's minds so that they might understand why the gospel is good news for them? To say that the nature of the atonement needs to be adjusted to fit the categories of the thoughts of a culture simply excuses Christ's disciples from teaching men so that the gospel makes sense to them. Is this not what Paul does at Athens when he teaches them that one God made the world and everything in it, made every nation from one man, commands all people to repent, will judge the world in righteousness, and has raised Jesus from the dead? Therefore, not only are Green and Baker fundamentally wrong, I believe, in thinking men do not understand guilt, but even if they are right, it merely brings to light the responsibility of the church to teach men the nature of the world so that they might understand and believe the gospel.

¹¹Denney rightly summed up the issue over 100 years ago, when he wrote, "There can be no gospel unless there is such a thing as a righteousness of God for the ungodly. But just as little can there be any gospel unless the integrity of God's character be maintained. The problem of the sinful world, the problem of all religion, the problem of God in dealing with a sinful race, is how to unite these two things[.] The Christian answer to the problem is given by St. Paul in the words: 'Jesus Christ whom God set forth a propitiation (or, in propitiatory power) in His blood.' . . . Something is done which enables God to justify the ungodly who believe in Jesus, and at the same time to appear signally and conspicuously a righteous God." James Denney, *The Death of Christ: Its Place and Interpretation in the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1903), 166. However, I would add to Denney's articulation that God justifies the ungodly while doing more than simply "appearing" to be a righteous judge. He justifies man while simultaneously remaining a righteous judge.

like sharing with a man who is about to be executed that he just won the lottery. Unless the cross proclaims how the righteous judge can justify the ungodly in such a way that his justice is not compromised, then the cross is not good news. And the only understanding of the atonement that answers how it is that God might do this is penal substitution.

The reason penal substitution is demanded is because though both opponents and proponents of penal substitution agree that God sent his Son to the cross because of his love for his people (e.g., John 3:16; Rom 5:8),¹² the cross is not (and could not have been) a triumph of God's love over his justice.¹³ God cannot decide to judge in a manner that is not "just" and "right" according to the standards that are intrinsic to him and that he has revealed in his Word.¹⁴ Therefore, one must understand the nature of the atonement as providing a means of forgiveness for God's people while satisfying God's just demands to punish sin. This is precisely what penal substitution claims.

¹²See, for example, Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 65; Clark H. Pinnock and Robert C. Brow, *Unbounded Love: A Good News Theology for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1994), 100-04; John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 123; Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 113; D. A. Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26: 'God Presented Him as a Propitiation,'" in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frame A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 133; John Murray, *Select Lectures in Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 of *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1977), 146; Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 190.

¹³Those who specifically address this issue of the cross not being a triumph of love over justice include Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 273; Paul Wells, *Cross Words: The Biblical Doctrine of the Atonement* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2006), 55; John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 31-32; Horton, *Lord and Servant*, 193-94; Derek Tidball, *The Message of the Cross: Wisdom Unsearchable, Love Indestructible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 192; John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 152; Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, CCT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 138-39; John S. Feinberg, *No One Like Him: The Doctrine of God*, FET (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2001), 346; Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus: 'The Scandal of the Cross,'" in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frame A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 157; Stephen E. Witmer, "The Lost Message of *The Lost Message of Jesus*," *Themelios* 31, no. 1 (2005): 66.

¹⁴See chap. 3 of this study.

Penal substitution claims that God gave his own Son in order that on the cross he might bear the punishment for sins deserved by those whom God justifies by faith.¹⁵ Furthermore, bearing the punishment for sins, Christ propitiated the wrath of the Father,¹⁶ since God justly judged sin in him. Therefore, as one who has justly judged sinners in Christ, God is able to justify those who have faith in his Son, crediting Christ's righteousness to them even as God allowed him to bear the penalty for their sins.¹⁷ The

¹⁵Though I do hold to the position of particular redemption, believing that Christ paid the penalty for the sins of only those who would believe (see John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, in vol. 10 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold [Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1967], 157-421), I do not mean to suggest that only those who hold to such a position may understand the cross in terms of penal substitution. It's possible for someone to proclaim that Jesus died to pay the penalty for the sins of all men without exception but that this payment is only applied to those who ultimately believe. I do not think that this is the biblical position, but I do not have the space to defend such a claim, nor is it within the scope of the purpose of this study to do so.

¹⁶Gathercole helpfully notes that "Christ's death is his bearing not only of . . . sins, but also of the divine punishment which follows them." Simon J. Gathercole, "Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood: The Evidence of Romans 3:21-4:25" in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 176. Though propitiation will also be addressed in discussion concerning Rom 3:25-26, it is appropriate to acknowledge now that this issue has been one of much debate. Those arguing that Christ's death should be understood in terms of propitiation include: Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 178-80; Schreiner, *Romans*, 178-99; idem, "Penal Substitution View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 87-88; Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, 31-32; Horton, *Lord and Servant*, 194; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 140; Morris, *Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 184-202; Gaffin, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 157; David Peterson, "Atonement in the New Testament," in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 42; Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 119-39; Moo, *Romans*, 231-50. For an argument against understanding Christ's death as propitiation, see C.H. Dodd, "ἸΛΑΣΚΕΣΘΑΙ, Its Cognates, Derivatives and Synonyms in the Septuagint," *JTS* 32 (1931): 352-60. For literature on the debate, see Roger R. Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," *WTJ* 17 (1954-55): 117-57.

¹⁷Though I do believe that the Scripture teaches the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer, I do not want to suggest that it is absolutely necessary to hold to the imputation of righteousness in order to hold to penal substitution. N. T. Wright is one example of someone who seems to uphold penal substitution while dismissing the notion of the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer (see, for example, Wright, *Romans*). For a defense of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, see D. A. Carson, "The Vindication of Imputation: On Fields of Discourse and Semantic Fields," in *Justification: What's At Stake in the Current Debates*, ed. Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 46-78; John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002); Brian Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006).

result is that, through the atonement, God justifies his people (declaring as righteous those who have faith in Christ) while displaying his justice (justly punishing sin). Thus, in the cross God demonstrates both his love and his justice.¹⁸

Biblical Evidence for Penal Substitution

However logical the above description may be for the manner in which the atonement functions, Green and Baker rightly note that the first and central question that must be answered is not whether this understanding of the atonement is coherent¹⁹ and addresses those elements required for redemption but “whether . . . penal substitutionary atonement is faithful to the teaching of Scripture.”²⁰ Therefore, the intent of this chapter is to show that penal substitutionary atonement is faithful to the teaching of Scripture and accounts for that which is necessary to redeem the created order, namely, the just removal of condemnation from man.

This aim will be achieved through an examination of four texts: Romans 3:25-

¹⁸One could argue that another model of the atonement could be sufficient to address the need for the removal of condemnation from individuals even in light of the difficulty posed by retributive justice. Two points should be given in response, however. The first is that no other model of the atonement addresses the removal of condemnation from individuals while accounting for God’s just demands that the guilty are punished. The focus of the other models of the atonement is intentionally on other issues, which they perceive to be the fundamental need of humanity. The second point is that opponents of penal substitution are aware that no other model of the atonement (nor a combination of all other models of the atonement) is sufficient to remove condemnation from individuals while satisfying God’s demands to punish the guilty for their sin. This is precisely why they have opted for alternate understandings of divine righteousness, judgment, and wrath (as discussed in the previous chapter) and argue consistently that God does not need to punish his Son in order to forgive sinners. Therefore, if the conclusions in the previous chapter are correct concerning the nature of God, then penal substitution is necessary for removing condemnation from individuals – that which underlies the plight of the created order.

¹⁹Though coherence alone is not sufficient for determining how the atonement should be understood, it is a necessary element in any articulation of the atonement.

²⁰Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 27. Green and Baker attempt to answer this question for themselves in chaps. 2-4 of their work (pp. 35-115) and, of course, conclude, “It will not do, therefore, to characterize the atonement as God’s punishment falling on Christ (i.e., God as subject, Christ as object) or as Christ’s appeasement . . . of God (Christ as subject, God as object).” *Ibid.*, 113.

26; Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and Galatians 3:13.²¹ These texts are chosen because they traditionally have been understood to teach the doctrine of penal substitution²² and because both Green and Travis identify these texts as crucial in understanding Jesus' death in terms of "sacrifice,"²³ which they perceive as the "matrix" within which "Paul develops the substitutionary nature of the death of Christ."²⁴ The

²¹Obviously this offering of Scriptural support will be limited because an attempt to show all the biblical support for understanding the atonement as penal substitution would take many pages. There are, however, many helpful volumes that have been written to show penal substitution to be the teaching of the Bible. See, for example, Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2007); Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*; Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James, eds. *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, & Practical Perspectives* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

²²For example, Ridderbos, in a section of his work in which he examines Rom 3:25-26 and argues that these verses teach penal substitution, writes, "And how much the vindictory and retributive righteousness of God is effected in Christ's death and how this can therefore hold as the only ground for the righteousness that is by faith appears very clearly from Gal 3:13, where it is said that Christ, by suffering himself to be crucified for us, has become a curse for us, so that the blessing of Abraham might be communicated to the gentiles by faith and not on the ground of works. We find the same thought in Romans 8:3, where it is said that God 'has condemned sin in the flesh' of his Son. All this is summarized finally in such pronouncements as 2 Cor 5:21: God has made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we should become the righteousness of God in him. The forensic idea is certainly very pronounced here. God not only treats the sinless Christ as though he were a sinner, but he makes him (by delivering him up to the death on the cross) to be sin in the forensic sense of the word. And it is in that same sense that those who are in Christ through faith become righteous, indeed, become 'the righteousness of God,' that is, may identify themselves with that which is acquitted in the judgment of God." Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard De Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 167-68. Thus, Ridderbos addresses each of these four texts in identifying the consistent teaching of penal substitution in the Scripture.

²³In two different sections, Green and Baker (*Recovering the Scandal*) address Jesus' death as sacrifice. In the first section ("The Death of Jesus as Sacrifice," pp. 63-65), the first four New Testament texts mentioned are: 2 Cor 5:14-6:2; Gal 3:10-14; Rom 3:25; and Rom 8:3 (ultimately they settle on addressing 2 Cor 5:21 when explaining that section of text). In the second section ("Sacrifice," 102-06), they only fail to mention Gal 3:10, while explicitly connecting the teaching of Rom 3:25; Rom 8:3; and 2 Cor 5:21. Likewise, Stephen Travis (*Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in the New Testament Thought*, 2nd ed. [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009]), in his chapter dealing with "Christ as the Bearer of Divine Judgement," has a section titled "Some Key Passages in Paul's Letters" in which the first three texts he deals with are Gal 3:10-14, 2 Cor 5:21, and Rom 3:24-26 (pp. 182-94). Then, in his conclusion to that chapter where he deals with the nature of sacrifice, he deals most exclusively with Rom 8:3 (pp. 196-97).

Because Green and Travis provide exegetical commentary on these verses while a number of other opponents of penal substitution examined in chapter three do not, I will mainly interact with the two of them in the examination of these texts.

²⁴Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 63.

manner in which each text will be examined is by first describing the traditional understanding of these texts and then noting and evaluating challenges against this traditional interpretation. The concluding section of the chapter will, then, bring together observations from the first section of the chapter, noting again the necessity of penal substitution in addressing the legal condemnation that underlies creation's "bondage to corruption" (Rom 8:21). Therefore, this chapter will now begin with an examination of Romans 3:25-26 and its contribution toward understanding the nature of the atonement.

**To Show God's Righteousness:
Romans 3:25-26**

Perhaps nothing speaks to the importance of Romans 3:21-26²⁵ in understanding and articulating the nature of the atonement more than the disagreement and dispute this text has elicited among scholars. In verses 25-26 alone, Wright has suggested that every word has been the subject of intense scholarly debate.²⁶ It should not be surprising, then, to find that those issues discussed in the previous chapter of this study (righteousness, retributive justice, wrath, and the atonement) all come to the fore in these few verses. One can hear the repetition of those issues in the interpretation of Romans 3:25-26 offered by Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach:

Disobedience to the law is disobedience to God himself. Sin is not a transgression of an abstract moral code: it is an affront to God's holy character. Moreover, when God punishes sin, he is not reluctantly conforming to the dictates of an arbitrary set of regulations that he would rather ignore: he is acting in conformity with his own justice and righteousness. Nowhere is this more obvious than in Romans 3:25-26, where Paul describes what God was doing when Christ suffered in our place. Christ

²⁵Cranfield suggests that these verses constitute the "centre and heart" of the book of Romans as a whole (Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:199), and Stuhlmacher similarly suggests that these verses form "the heart of the letter to the Romans" (Peter Stuhlmacher, *Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994], 39).

²⁶Wright, *Romans*, 472.

did not die in order to satisfy an external standard of justice, but rather to demonstrate *God's* justice—that is, the perfect righteousness of his own character. . . . Penal substitution reflects the Bible's teaching that God's law is the expression of his own righteous, holy character, and that it was in accordance with this law that Christ was punished in our place.²⁷

If this text indeed speaks to all these issues, it is certainly an important portion of Scripture in dealing with the matters revealed in chapter three of this study and therefore important in demonstrating that penal substitution is necessary in answering the fundamental plight of the created order.

Before hastily accepting or dismissing this understanding of the text, however, it is important to look more closely at the verses themselves. Yet this demands the preliminary work of examining Paul's argument in the section leading up to these verses. After all, if 3:21-26 answers the dilemma unfolded in 1:18-3:20,²⁸ then it is important to comprehend Paul's statement of the problem in this section. As has already been noted, individuals are unlikely to agree on a solution if they do not first agree on the problem. So here, how one understands the plight of humanity laid out in 1:18-3:20 may be the most crucial factor in determining how one understands Paul's solution in 3:21-26.²⁹

²⁷ Jeffrey, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 302-03 (emphasis original).

²⁸For claims that Paul answers in 3:21-26 the problem which he lays out in 1:18-3:20, see C. H. Dodd, *The Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1932), 48-49; Luke Timothy Johnson, "Rom 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus," *CBQ* 44 (1982): 78; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, AB, vol. 33 (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 341-43; Rohinton K. Mody, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement in Paul: An Exegetical Study of Romans 3:25-26," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 120; Byrne, *Romans*, 122-23; Gathercole, "Justified by Faith; Justified by His Blood," 149-50; Schreiner, *Romans*, 178-79; Moo, *Romans*, 218; Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 119-21. Dunn does not explicitly say that 3:21-26 answers the problem of 1:18-3:20, but he does write of Rom 3:25, "Assuredly, the logic of Paul's exposition is that the wrath of God (expounded in 1:18-3:20) is somehow averted by Jesus' death." Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 171.

²⁹Gathercole, for example, suggests that the debate concerning the meaning of ἱλαστήριον in 3:25 should rest more on the flow of the argument in the book leading up to this verse than to references for how this word is used in other Greek literature. Simon Gathercole, "The Cross and Substitutionary Atonement," *SBET* 21, no. 2 (2003): 161.

Therefore, in looking at the teaching of Romans 3:21-26, this chapter will first examine Paul's argument in 1:18-3:20.

Romans 1:18-3:20. Though Romans 1:18-3:20 is wrought with its own points of dispute,³⁰ one clear note is that Paul frames this section by declaring humanity's guilt before God.³¹ He begins in 1:18 by stating that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" and ends in 3:9-20 by declaring that "all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin" (3:9), "none is righteous" (3:10), and "by the works of the law no human being will be justified in [God's] sight" (3:20).³² Therefore, if one is to conclude that this section teaches something other than the universal condemnation of humanity so that God's wrath hangs over them, he or she will have to ignore the manner in which Paul begins and concludes his argument.

But it is not simply the introduction and conclusion that reveal Paul's theme in these verses. Rather, the flow of the entire argument from 1:18 to 3:20 shows the guilt of all of humanity before God.³³ Paul begins the text with a statement that serves as a

³⁰Carson has provided a helpful and brief summary of the variant understandings that have been voiced concerning Paul's teaching throughout Rom 1:18-3:20. See, Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 119.

³¹Carson rightly notes that regardless of how one resolves the differing matters from 1:18-3:20, "the framework must not be forgotten" and concludes that this text shows that "individually and collectively, Jew and Gentile alike, . . . stand under the just wrath of God, because of our sin." Ibid., 120.

³²It is worth noting as well that Paul focuses on individuals in the midst of talking about all of humanity. Thus, in 3:10, he stresses that not one (οὐδὲς εἷς) is righteous and in 3:19, notes that every mouth (πάντο στόμα) may be stopped and held accountable before God.

³³So Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 33; Andrew T. Lincoln, "From Wrath to Justification: Tradition, Gospel and Audience in the Theology of Romans 1:18-4:25," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1993 Seminar Papers*, ed. Eugene H. Lovering, Jr. (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 212; Murray, *Romans*, 34; VanDrunen, "Natural Law and the Works Principle under Adam and Moses," in *The Law Is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant*, ed. Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 303; Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 120; Gathercole, "Justified by Faith; Justified

heading for the entire section,³⁴ as he writes in 1:18 that “the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.” Then, in verses 18-32, he argues that the Gentiles are unrighteous, condemned, and under the wrath of God. Within these verses, he shows that though the Gentiles do not have the law, what may be known about God is evident to them because God has revealed his “eternal power and divine nature” (1:20) in the created order. However, instead of worshiping the true God, they “exchanged the glory of the immortal God” (1:23) and worshiped the creature rather than the Creator (1:25). Therefore, God gave them over to their “dishonorable passions” (1:26) “to do what ought not be done” (1:28) so that they were “filled with all manner of unrighteousness” (1:29). That unrighteousness was not some dormant wicked desire, however, but was continually carried out as they (knowing that those who did such things deserved to die) pressed forward in their unrighteous acts and gave approval to others who did the same (1:32). Thus, Paul shows not only the corrupt nature of the pagan Gentiles but also confirms that death is the just penalty for their unrighteousness.³⁵

Then, in 2:1-3:8, Paul turns his attention to those who received the law (the Jews) and shows that they too are unrighteous and face God’s judgment. In 2:1, Paul

by His Blood,” 149-50; Schreiner, *Paul*, 103-10; Byrne, *Romans*, 65; Wright well describes this section, writing, “The first major section of the letter is a courtroom scene. It opens with the sentence being passed; it moves back to explain the grounds for the verdict, highlights the problems the judge has had to cope with in hearing the case, and concludes with the guilty parties in the dock, with nothing to say in their defense.” Wright, *Romans*, 428.

³⁴So Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 51; Schreiner, *Romans*, 81; Moo, *Romans*, 99; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 34; Byrne, *Romans*, 65.

³⁵Travis agrees that death is the penalty for sin in Rom 1:32. Stephen Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in the New Testament Thought*, 2nd ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2009), 193-94. See also Gathercole, “Justified by Faith; Justified by His Blood,” 175; Byrne, *Romans*, 72; Moo, *Romans*, 121; Schreiner, *Romans*, 99; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:134.

begins a diatribe against an imaginary Jewish opponent who might point to the advantage the Jew has over the pagan Gentile.³⁶ Paul argues that his opponent, by passing judgment on another, condemns himself because he practices the very same things (2:1), and he presupposes that his opponent knows that “the judgment of God rightly falls on those who do such things” (2:2). Accordingly, then, Paul tells his opponent that he is “storing up wrath” for himself “on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (2:5). On that day, God will “render to each one according to his works,” including “wrath and fury” for the unrighteous” (2:6-8). Thus, while the Jew has the advantage of receiving the law and seeing the promise of future salvation therein, he does not stand in a superior position to the Gentile in terms of judgment because “all who have sinned without the law will . . . perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law” (2:12). That is, God’s impartiality will be shown in that everyone who sins will die—whether or not they have the law. It is only those who actually *do* the law (whether having the written code or the law written on their hearts) who will be justified (2:13-15).³⁷ Since the Jew, then, is unrighteous, God’s righteous judgment will be manifested on that day when he will “inflict wrath” on the unrighteous, and their condemnation will be just (3:5-8).

Therefore, it is not simply the pagan Gentiles but the Jews as well who stand condemned before God and are storing up wrath for themselves on that day when God’s

³⁶Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 296-97; Schreiner, *Romans*, 105; Stuhlmacher, *Romans*, 39; Gathercole, “Justified by Faith; Justified by His Blood,” 149; Byrne, *Romans*, 80. Wright acknowledges that it is a diatribe but believes Paul’s imaginary opponent is not strictly a Jew but “anyone who . . . tries to adopt a superior posture . . . pagan moralists . . . or Jews.” Wright, *Romans*, 437.

³⁷We must assume here, however, that Paul envisions no one actually doing the law, since he concludes that “by the works of the law no human being will be justified” (Rom 3:20) and adds in Gal 3:11, “It is evident that no one is justified before God by the law.”

righteous judgment will be revealed. Paul affirms this summation of his teaching from 1:32-3:8, as he declares in 3:9, “All, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin” (3:9). Also, lest anyone think Paul is overly pessimistic about his view of humanity, he strings together a number of Old Testament texts that confirm the unrighteousness of humanity (3:10-18). In doing so, Paul concludes that if the law provides such an indictment about the Jews (who were given the law), then it easily follows that those without the law are equally unrighteousness (3:19).³⁸ Thus, every mouth is stopped, and the “whole world” is “accountable to God,” unrighteous and condemned because of their disobedience to God’s law (by which no man will be justified)³⁹ (3:19-20).

Therefore, the teaching of Paul leading up to Romans 3:21-26 is that all of humanity (Jew and Gentile) is sinful, under divine condemnation, and due the “wrath and fury” (2:8) of God “on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (2:5). Carson rightly notes,

The problem is not first and foremost the failure of Israel (national or otherwise), or

³⁸Gathercole writes, “It should be noted that Paul does not mean, in this first instance, for this catena of quotations to prove the universal sinfulness of humankind in general, but rather the sinfulness of Israel.” He roots this conclusion in Paul’s declaration in 3:19 that what the law says it says to those under the law (Gathercole, “Justified by Faith; Justified by His Blood,” 150). However, Schreiner rightly suggests that Paul does intend to show universal sinfulness here. He writes, “How could the whole world be liable to God’s judgment because of a law given to the Jews? The answer is not that difficult. If the Jews, who had the privilege of being God’s covenantal and elect people, could not keep the law, then it follows that no one, including the Gentiles, can” (Schreiner, *Romans*, 168). Moo argues similarly and then notes, “We must remember that Paul’s chief purpose throughout Rom. 1:18-3:20 is not to demonstrate that Gentiles are guilty and in need of God’s righteousness – for this could be assumed – but that Jews bear the same burden and have the same need. It is for this reason that, while all people are included in the scope of vv. 19-20, there is particular reference to the Jews and their law” (Moo, *Romans*, 206).

³⁹Paul adds that the reason no man is justified by the law is because “through the law comes knowledge of sin” (Rom 3:20). That is, the law was never given for the purpose of giving life, “For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law” (Gal 3:21). But that was not the law’s purpose. Rather, the law was given to “[imprison] everything under sin” (Gal 3:22). It was given to “increase the trespass” (Rom 5:20), so that “sin might be shown to be sin, and through the commandment might become sinful beyond measure” (Rom 7:13). And in doing so, man is to see his inability and hopeless condemnation and so believe in Christ (through whom alone is justification and life possible) and “be justified by faith” (Gal 3:24).

inappropriate use of the law, or the urgency of linking Jews and Gentiles (all genuine themes in these chapters), but the wrath of God directed against every human being, Jew and Gentile alike—a wrath elicited by universal human wickedness. . . . The flow of the argument that takes us from Romans 1:18-32 to Romans 3:9-20 leaves us no escape: individually and collectively, Jew and Gentile alike, we stand under the just wrath of God because of our sin.⁴⁰

The argument of these verses, then, should weigh heavily on one's understanding of 3:21-26. It is the very flow of the Romans itself (not just some predetermined commitment to see penal substitution in these verses)⁴¹ that leads one to anticipate Paul's solution to the plight in which humanity finds itself in 3:21-26. Paul's argument demands that the reader comes to these important verses, asking how it is that God's wrath may be averted.

Romans 3:21-24. Paul quickly confirms that the reader is asking the right question and that the answer is provided in the cross of Christ, as he declares in 3:24 that sinners are justified “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (3:24). Paul begins the section by signifying a salvation-historical shift from the old covenant to the new (Νυνὶ δὲ). He then shows that this new era in salvation history is marked by the disclosure of God's righteousness.⁴² He writes, “But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law” (3:21), further illustrating that this new era is not only marked by a disclosure of righteousness but a righteousness which is separate from the law. That is, the law-covenant, which was to act as a “guardian until Christ came”

⁴⁰Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 120.

⁴¹Green and Baker suggest that proponents of penal substitution have attempted to create a “workable foundation” for penal substitution so that this understanding of the atonement is “all the more palatable or inviting.” Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 25.

⁴²Lincoln, “From Wrath to Justification,” 212.

(Gal 3:24) and imprisoned everything under sin “until the coming faith would be revealed” (Gal 3:25) has done its good and holy work. It has effectively borne witness to the righteousness of God which has now been manifested in the coming of Christ (Rom 3:21) and which is counted to those who believe (Rom 3:22; 4:5). Moreover, all are in need of this righteousness that exceeds their own, for “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (3:22-23). As they believe, however, they “are justified by [God’s] grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (3:24). This gift of righteousness through faith is the answer to the plight of humanity which had been laid out in 1:18-3:20. God has acted in history to provide righteousness, “pardoning those who have been declared guilty by his judgment,”⁴³ so that they might no longer stand guilty but justified before the righteous judge.

This is, indeed, good news, and it provides a dramatic shift from the image of universal condemnation painted in 1:18-3:20. However, there still remains the question concerning how the righteous judge is able to justify sinners and remain righteous. How is it possible for the one who will by no means clear the guilty to do that very thing? This question is answered in 3:25-26.

Romans 3:25-26. In these verses, Paul writes,

God put [Christ] forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

By this, evangelicals have traditionally understood Paul to mean that God sent his Son

⁴³Ibid.

into the world to die on the cross, bearing God's wrath toward sinners.⁴⁴ By doing this, God revealed that he had not simply overlooked sin but was punishing the guilty in the person of his Son—in accord with his righteous nature (εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν δίκαιον).⁴⁵ The reason such a demonstration of righteousness was necessary is because by leaving sinners unpunished, God was seemingly acting contrary to his self-revelation as one who will by no means clear the guilty (Exod 34:7) and congruent to the very action he considers an abomination (i.e., justifying the wicked (Prov 17:15)). Therefore, God demonstrated his righteousness by putting forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice (whereby his wrath was appeased) so that it might be clear that he is indeed the righteous judge who does what is right. At the same time, however, because Christ bore the penalty for sinners, God is able to pardon those who have faith in his Son (καὶ δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ). Thus, through one act of the atoning work of Christ,

⁴⁴See, for example, Schreiner, *Romans*, 178-99; Moo, *Romans*, 219-43; Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 184-202; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 574-75; Murray, *Romans*, 108-21; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 207-12; Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 119-139; Gaffin, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 156-62; J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 179-91; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 77-85; Peterson, "Atonement in the New Testament," 39-45; Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 829-33.

⁴⁵Explaining how it is that God can be said to have punished sinners in Christ so that he remains just, John Owen comments, "God may inflict the punishment due to one on another, after,—in consequence of his own right and the consent of that other,—he hath laid the sins upon that other on account of which he inflicts the punishment. He might punish the elect in their own persons, or in their surety standing in their room and stead; and when he is punished, they also are punished: for in this point of view the federal head and those represented by him are not considered as distinct, but as one; for although they are not one in respect of personal unity, they are, however, one,—that is, one body in mystical union, yea, *one mystical Christ*;—namely, the surety is the head, those represented by him the members; and when the head is punished, the members also are punished," John Owen, *A Dissertation on Divine Justice*, in vol. 10 of *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1967), 598 (emphasis original).

One could also make appeal, however, to the Trinity in order to express the justice of God the Father inflicting punishment upon the Son for the sins of others. That is, Christ is not simply a third party, undergoing the punishment of the guilty. Rather, since there is one God existing in three persons, to say that the Father inflicts punishment upon the Son for the sins of his people is to say that *God*, the Father inflicts punishment upon *God*, the Son for the sins of his people. That is, the one God is both the subject and object of judgment on the cross.

God is able to be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. This is how traditional interpreters have understood these verses, and this understanding is the precise claim of penal substitutionary atonement.

Righteousness and retribution. However, this traditional reading is challenged by opponents of penal substitution in three ways. The first of these is, no doubt, anticipated in light of the issues explored in the previous chapter of this study. It is that δικαιοσύνης, which appears in both verses 25 and 26, should be understood to denote solely covenant faithfulness, with no notion of retribution.⁴⁶ If one understands divine righteousness in this manner, then it would seemingly eliminate the idea that God's leaving sins unpunished would somehow call his righteousness into question. Rather, that which might call into question the righteousness of God would be a delay in fulfilling his covenant promise to forgive sins (e.g., Jer 31:31-34).

If God promised to forgive and justify his people and yet had failed to do so to this point, then it could suggest that he is somehow less than faithful to his covenant. This would create a need to demonstrate his covenant faithfulness. The act of sending his Son to the cross in order to bring about the forgiveness of sins would, thus, serve as a demonstration of God's faithfulness to his covenant promises.

Such a reading of the text certainly provides the reader with a coherent and

⁴⁶Ziesler serves as an example of someone who argues that "righteousness" in 3:25-26 denotes "covenant faithfulness" without any element of divine retribution (John Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, TPI New Testament Commentaries [Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989], 70, 108). Travis, in turn, entertains the traditional reading *and* that of Zeisler as he considers the meaning of these important verses. In the end, he seems to support much of Zeisler's argument but then writes, "My purpose in this discussion of Rom 3:21-26 has been not so much to advocate a particular view as to draw attention to the ambiguities and difficulties which seem to me to make any dogmatically one-sided view unwise." Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 193.

logical argument that makes sense of significant portions of this text. But there are a few reasons this reading must be rejected. The first reason is that “righteousness” simply cannot be reduced to covenant faithfulness with no notion of retribution.⁴⁷ Therefore, though righteousness no doubt denotes God’s faithfulness, to eliminate the idea of retribution from divine righteousness is to ignore God’s revelation to his covenant people that he is a God who punishes the guilty.⁴⁸

The second reason one cannot reduce righteousness to covenant faithfulness in this text is because Romans 3:25-26 answers the problem laid out in 1:18-3:20, and the problem articulated there is not focused on how God might be faithful to the covenant⁴⁹ but how anyone might be justified when all have sinned and are justly condemned. Yet the problem demanding God’s demonstration of righteousness is not found in 1:18-3:20 alone. It is also seen in 3:25-26, as there Paul reveals that God needed to demonstrate his righteousness “because in his divine forbearance, he had passed over former sins” (διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ).

⁴⁷See chap. 3 of this study.

⁴⁸That “righteousness” in Rom 3:25-26 refers to God’s acting according to the standards of his intrinsic justice and thus demands a retributive element, see John Murray, *Select Lectures in Systematic Theology*, vol. 2 of *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1977), 146; idem, *Romans*, 118-19; Stott, *Romans*, 112; idem, *The Cross of Christ*, 129-52; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 138-40; Mody, “Penal Substitutionary Atonement in Paul,” 120; Schreiner, “The Penal Substitution View,” 87-88; idem, *Romans*, 191-98; Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 137-38; Peterson, “Atonement in the New Testament,” 40; Moo, *Romans*, 231-50; Frank S. Theilman, “The Atonement,” in *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann and Paul R. House (Grand Rapids: Baker Academics, 2007), 111-12.

⁴⁹The element of covenant faithfulness does appear in Rom 3:3. However, the issue impeding the forgiveness of sinners noted throughout 1:18-3:20 is the justness of sinners’ condemnation. They “deserve to die” (1:32) so that the judgment of God “rightly falls” (2:2) on them “when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (2:5) and he renders “to each one according to his works” (2:6).

If righteousness is understood in this text to eliminate the notion of retributive justice, then the phrase “διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ” makes little sense. Why would God need to demonstrate his covenant faithfulness to forgive if he had already made a practice of passing over the sins his people had committed? It would seem, rather, that he would need to demonstrate his promise to forgive if he had *not* passed over their sins. One could make sense of this dilemma by translating the phrase διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἀμαρτημάτων as “through the forgiveness of former sins,”⁵⁰ understanding “πάρεσιν” to mean “forgiveness.” That would suggest that God demonstrated his covenant faithfulness to forgive sins *by forgiving sins*. However, πάρεσιν does not mean “forgiveness” but an overlooking or postponement of punishment.⁵¹

Furthermore, if one understands Paul to mean that God demonstrated his covenant faithfulness through the forgiveness of former sins, ἀνοχη would need to be understood as God’s patience or delay with regard to forgiving sins. Such a suggestion is not illogical in the text, for Paul could be arguing that God passed over sins while

⁵⁰Carson suggests this as a possible way someone could attempt to hold to righteousness as only meaning covenant faithfulness, though he is against such an understanding of δικαιοσύνη and thinks the suggested translation is “an unlikely rendering” that “depends on too many philological or syntactical improbabilities” (Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 137). Travis made this argument in his first rendering of the chapter “Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment,” arguing that “πάρεσιν should be rendered as ‘forgiveness,’ rather than ‘overlooking,’ and that a fully salvific sense of the righteousness of God in 3:25-26 is in view: God demonstrates his righteousness because he has *forgiven* sins committed in the past” (Stephen H. Travis, “Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment in Paul’s Thought about the Atonement,” in *Jesus of Nazareth: Lord and Christ: Essays on the Historical Jesus and New Testament Christology*, ed. Joel B. Green and Max Turner [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994], 339-40). However, in his updated version of this chapter, Travis strongly questions the translation of πάρεσιν as “forgiveness,” noting that “the word does not occur elsewhere in the Greek Scriptures and does not mean ‘forgiveness’ in the occasional occurrences outside the Bible, and the related verb *pariēmi* rarely, if ever, has the meaning ‘forgive’” (Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 193).

⁵¹BDAG, 776; see also Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 137 Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 193.

somehow delaying their ultimate forgiveness. But the problem is that ἀνοχη simply is not used to communicate a delay of forgiveness but is used consistently in Romans and the rest of the New Testament to refer to God’s patient delay of *judgment*. For example, in Romans 2:4, where Paul warns against presuming on the “riches of [God’s] kindness and forbearance [ἀνοχης] and patience,” he writes with God’s judgment in mind.⁵² This is clear from Paul’s statement in the previous verse and from the stated intention of God’s forbearance. In 2:3, Paul writes, “Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape *the judgment of God?*” It is with that question in mind that Paul warns against presuming on the riches of God’s ἀνοχης in 2:4. Then, after providing the warning against presumption in the first half of verse 4, Paul notes that God’s kindness (manifested in his ἀνοχης) is meant to lead to repentance. This makes little sense if ἀνοχη refers to God’s delay of forgiveness. However, if ἀνοχη refers to God’s patient delay of judgment, then the reason for repentance in the present is clear. Accordingly, ἀνοχη in 2:5 and 3:25 should be read as a “delay of wrath.”⁵³

This means that the phrase “διὰ τὴν πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων ἐν τῇ ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ” in 3:25 means that God needed to demonstrate his righteousness because he had passed over former sins, delaying his judgment. That is, by failing to punish sins, God was leaving his righteousness open to question.⁵⁴ This only makes

⁵²Gathercole also notes that it is used in an identical way in 1 Tim 1:16; 1 Pet 3:20; and 2 Pet 3:9, and 15. Gathercole, “Justified by Faith; Justified by His Blood,” 181.

⁵³Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 81.

sense if righteousness is understood to include the notion of retribution.⁵⁵ With this traditional understanding of righteousness, the meaning of the text becomes clear as Carson's comments reveal:

If δικαιοσύνη designates God's righteousness or justice, whether his impartiality, or his fairness, or all that is in accordance with his own character, then the entire phrase might be paraphrased as follows: "in order to demonstrate that God is just, [which was made necessary] because he had passed over sins committed before." Here the previous disabilities are turned into strengths: δικαιοσύνη is read more naturally, παρέσις is now rendered "passed over," and δία plus the accusative is translated "because." The expression "sins committed before" is explained in Romans 3:26. The phrase "in his forbearance" must be connected with the "passed over": it refers to the period before the cross. In other words, the sins committed beforehand are not those committed by an individual before his or her conversion, but those committed by the human race before the cross. This brings us back to the profoundly salvation-historical categories already manifest in Romans 3:21. . . . And this, in turn, means that God's 'righteousness' or 'justice' must refer to some aspect of his character that, apart from the sacrifice of Christ, might have been viewed with suspicion had sinners in the past been permitted to slip by without facing the full severity of condemnation for sin. God's 'righteousness' has been upheld by his provision of Christ as the propitiation in his blood.⁵⁶

⁵⁴So Lincoln, "From Wrath to Justification," 212-15; Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 87-88; Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 137-38; Mody, "Penal Substitutionary Atonement," 129; Moo, *Romans*, 237-50; Murray, *Romans*, 218-19; Stott, *Romans*, 116; Gathercole, "Justified by Faith, Justified by His Blood," 169. Byrne suggests that "the point is not that God left the sins unpunished but that God left them 'undealt with'—in the sense of not having as yet brought about the expiation finally worked in the Christ event." However, he does acknowledge that ἀνοχη is temporal as "Paul has in view the epoch when God refrained from inflicting (upon the Jews) the eschatological wrath occasioned by human sin" (Byrne, *Romans*, 133-34). It is difficult to imagine, then, how Byrne is able to acknowledge that ἀνοχη refers to God's patient delay in not inflicting wrath on sins and then somehow deny that God inflicted his wrath for sin at the cross when Paul states that God put Christ forward on the cross to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. Gathercole, rather, is surely right in noting, "Thus if God's ἀνοχή is the patient delay of his judgement, it follows that in Christ he has at last executed that judgment upon sin." Gathercole, "Justified by Faith," 181.

⁵⁵Wright, who understands righteousness as covenant faithfulness does not eliminate the idea of retributive justice but subsumes the notion under covenant faithfulness. Therefore, Wright explains these verses, writing, "God had passed over, that is, left unpunished, acts of sin committed in former times. . . . The first question at issue, then—the aspect of God's righteousness that might seem to have been called into question is now demonstrated after all—is God's proper dealing with sins—i.e., punishment. Whatever Paul is saying in the first half of v. 25, it must be such as to lead to the conclusion that now, at last, God has punished sins as they deserved. . . . Whatever precisely Paul intends to say, it must have to do with the means by which the righteous God could, without compromising that righteousness, find in favor of the ungodly (4:5)." Wright, *Romans*, 472-73.

For these reasons, it is best to affirm that Paul's reference to God's righteousness in 3:25-26 includes the notion of retribution. But there is another element of this text that has faced serious challenge.

Expiation and/or propitiation. The second point of interpretation within this text that has elicited great argument is the meaning of ἱλαστήριον in 3:25. It is unnecessary to rehash the long-standing debate leading up to the present, concerning whether the word denotes the idea of propitiation (appeasement of divine wrath) or expiation (the wiping away of sins).⁵⁷ Nor is it surprising that Green and Baker hold to the latter interpretation of this term, believing that ἱλαστήριον refers simply to the removal of sins in this text.⁵⁸ As noted in chapter three of this study, they understand Jesus' death as an act whereby Christ is identified with sin so that sin itself is destroyed by his death.⁵⁹

There are problems with eliminating the idea of propitiation from Romans 3:25, however. First, merely to understand ἱλαστήριον as expiation fails to do justice to the argument in 1:18-3:20. The problem in 1:18-3:20 is that all men find themselves justly condemned (3:8) before the righteous judge who will "inflict wrath" (3:5) in his righteous judgment when he renders "to each one according to his works" (2:6). Therefore, all men stand guilty and condemned before the righteous judge (3:8-9), knowing that they "deserve to die" (1:32) and face God's "wrath and fury" (2:8). In

⁵⁶Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 137-38.

⁵⁷See n. 16, above.

⁵⁸Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 104.

Romans 2, it is made clear that “God is infallible both in the sense that he is wholly accurate in his detection of sin (2:3), and in that he invariably *does* punish it (2:5).”⁶⁰ It is a truth Paul presupposes in the diatribe with his Jewish opponent (2:2-5). Therefore, one comes to 3:21-26, asking how it is possible for God to execute his righteous judgment against sinners *and* justify those who have sinned. If the answer is provided in the death of Christ (and it is, 3:25), then one should understand that God’s judgment is meted out in the cross.

Further, the reason God’s righteousness needed to be demonstrated in the first place is because in God’s “divine forbearance he had passed over former sins” (3:25), delaying the inevitable judgment sinners deserved (2:3-5). If God’s righteousness, then, is demonstrated in the death of Christ (“by his blood,” 3:25), it must mean that God has finally poured out his wrath against sinners in the event of Christ’s death.⁶¹ One must remember that God’s ἀνοχη refers to God’s patient delay of judgment. If the cross is the revelation of that delay coming to an end, it necessitates an understanding of propitiation in Christ’s atoning work.⁶² Thus, God’s punishment for sin is appeased in the death of

⁵⁹Ibid., 63-65.

⁶⁰Gathercole, “Justified by Faith,” 169 (emphasis original).

⁶¹Noting the effect that the broader and immediate context of Rom 1:18-3:26 has on one’s understanding of ἰλαστήριον, Wright summarizes the debate and demanded conclusion: “Dealing with wrath or punishment is propitiation; with sin, expiation. You propitiate a person who is angry; you expiate a sin, crime, or stain of your character. Vehement rejection of the former idea in many quarters has led some to insist that only ‘expiation’ is in view here. But the fact remains that in 1:18-3:20 Paul has declared that the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness and wickedness and that despite God’s forbearance this will finally be meted out; that in 5:8, and in the whole promise of 8:1-30, those who are Christ’s are rescued from wrath; and that the passage in which the reason for the change is stated is 3:25-26, where we find that God, though in forbearance allowing sins to go unpunished for a while, has now revealed that righteousness, that saving justice, that causes people to be declared ‘righteous’ even though they were sinners.” Wright, *Romans*, 476.

Christ.⁶³

Intrinsic consequences? One final challenge to the traditional understanding of these verses comes from Travis, who, interestingly, recognizes these verses as teaching that, in his death, Christ bears a penalty for sinners. He writes, “In his death Christ bears the consequences of human sin so that we do not have to bear them. In view of Paul’s description of death as the penalty of sin in Romans 1:32 it is reasonable to use penal language in explaining Romans 3:25-26.”⁶⁴ How, then, does he challenge the traditional interpretation of this text? He argues that though Christ bears the consequences for man’s sin, it simply means that he bears “the intrinsic outworking, under God’s control, of the consequences of human choices and actions,” not punishment “inflicted by God ‘from outside.’”⁶⁵

Travis’s reductionistic understanding of the penalty borne by Christ is difficult to maintain for a couple of reasons. First, as has already been illustrated, it is impossible to account for all of the demonstrations of God’s wrath in Scripture while limiting the concept to the intrinsic outworking of human choices and actions.⁶⁶ Therefore, there is

⁶²Gathercole helpfully notes that just as *ἀνοχη* does not refer to God’s gracious delay with regard to forgiveness, nor does it tend to refer to “a patient delay on God’s part in anticipation of his *wiping away* sins at a later date. Rather, the concept inevitably refer to a gracious delay, on God’s part, of *judgment*.” Gathercole, “Justified by Faith,” 181 (emphasis original).

⁶³Gathercole also rightly notes that reducing *ἱλαστήριον* to expiation diminishes the reality that death is a penalty for sin. Paul had taught that the unrighteous “deserve to die” (1:32) and that God “will render to each one according to his works” (2:6). Therefore, if Jesus dies because of our sin being credited to him, then it means that he undergoes the penalty we merited (i.e., death). *Ibid.*, 179.

⁶⁴Travis goes on to add, “But that is not the only possible language to use.” Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 193-94.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 199.

⁶⁶See chap. 3 of this study.

no reason to think that Christ bears only that aspect of God's wrath that can be accounted for in the natural working of the world.⁶⁷ The text gives no indication that the reader should make this assumption.

Second, Travis's understanding of divine judgment ignores Paul's description of God's wrath in Romans 1:18-3:20. It is true that one way God's wrath manifests itself in the present is through God giving individuals over to their sinful passions (1:24-31). However, this is clearly not the fullest revelation of God's wrath, for Paul later mentions that the unrighteous one is "storing up wrath for [himself] on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed" (2:4). Therefore, though God manifests man's condemnation in the present, it is clearly not a full revelation of his wrath, for that will come only on the "day of wrath." On that day, God "will render to each one according to his works" including "wrath and fury" to the unrighteous (2:6). He will inflict⁶⁸ wrath on the unrighteous (3:5) as their just condemnation (3:8). This is clearly retributive punishment.⁶⁹ Therefore, Travis's understanding that on the cross Jesus bore what can only be termed a "reductionistic" version of divine wrath is untenable and should be rejected.

Conclusion. It is, therefore, the traditional reading of Romans 3:25-26 which

⁶⁷By "natural working of the world" I do not intend to suggest that Travis separates divine wrath from God himself but use this phrase to highlight Travis's suggestion that wrath does not enter the world from outside but is intrinsic to the working of the world under God's control.

⁶⁸That this is the meaning of ἐπιφέρω, see BDAG, 386. They cite the *Epistle of Aristeas*, 253 and Josephus, *Antiquities*, 2.296.

⁶⁹I have shown further difficulties with Travis's argument below. See pp. 150-57 (esp. 154-57).

best accounts for the argument of the text itself as well as the immediate and broader context. This reading understands Paul's argument to be that, on the cross, God put forth his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice (whereby God's wrath was appeased) so that it might be clear that he is indeed the righteous judge who does what is right. This demonstration of God's righteousness was necessary because God had passed over sins previously committed, which called into question his righteousness. In the atoning work of Christ, however, God revealed that his judgment was only delayed until Christ came to bear the just penalty for sinners. Thus, God not only reveals his righteousness (through exercising retribution) but also enables the condemnation that man had heaped upon himself to be removed. In this one act of the death of Christ, God is able to be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, Romans 3:25-26 should be understood as teaching penal substitutionary atonement.

**He Condemned Sin in the Flesh:
Romans 8:3**

In Romans 8:3, Paul argues that God has done what the law was unable to do (since it was weakened by the flesh). By "sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for a sin offering,⁷⁰ he condemned sin in the flesh." Evangelicals have traditionally understood this verse to teach that the removal of condemnation from believers is grounded in the substitutionary death of Christ.⁷¹ That is, verse 3 functions

⁷⁰This translation reflects my understanding that *καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας* should be translated "and for a sin offering." For the most thorough argument in defense of this translation, see N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 220-25.

⁷¹See, for example, Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 151, 192; Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 280 n. 2; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 86-87; Peterson, "Atonement in the New Testament," 45; Gathercole, "Justified by Faith," 177; Moo, *Romans*, 481; Schreiner, *Romans*, 403; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:383.

as the ground for the declaration made in verse 1. There is “now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (8:1) *because* God sent his Son to bear the penalty for their sins, as he “condemned sin in [Jesus’] flesh” (8:3).

The object of condemnation. There are some challenges to this understanding, however. The first comes in the claim that the object of condemnation in verse 3 is not Jesus but sin.⁷² Travis and Green demonstrate this understanding of the text. Both rely on Dunn’s understanding of sacrifice,⁷³ arguing,

The sin offering, like Jesus’ death in Romans 8:3, was meant to deal with sin; . . . as Jesus in his death represented humanity in its fallenness “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Rom. 8:3), so the sin-offering represented the sinner in his or her sin; and . . . the death of the sacrificial animal was seen as the death of the sinner *qua* sinner, that is, the destruction of the person’s sin. There is no place for the popular idea that in the sacrificial ritual God is somehow punishing the animal so that the punishment should not fall on the sinner . . . or . . . that something parallel to that is happening in the . . . death of Christ.”⁷⁴

Therefore, what is happening in the cross (according to this understanding) is that sin is being “destroyed, done away with”⁷⁵ through the sacrifice of Jesus, not that Jesus is somehow bearing God’s punishment for sin.

There are weaknesses with this position, however. First, it will not do to try to separate sin from Jesus as that which is being “condemned” in the cross. The text simply

⁷²That is, the object of κατέκρινεν in 8:3 is ἁμαρτίαν, not υἶόν.

⁷³For Dunn’s full argument concerning the nature of Old Testament sacrifice, see James D. G. Dunn, “Paul’s Understanding of the Death of Jesus as Sacrifice,” in *Sacrifice and Redemption: Durham Essays in Theology*, ed. S. W. Sykes (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 43-48. For an alternative understanding of the meaning and mechanism of OT sacrifice, see Gordon J. Wenham, “The Theology of Old Testament Sacrifice,” in *Sacrifice in the Bible*, ed. Roger T. Beckwith and Martin J. Selman (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), 75-87.

⁷⁴Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 197; similarly, Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 63-65; Green, “Must We Imagine?,” 161-64.

⁷⁵ Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 197.

will not uphold some antithesis between Jesus and sin as the object of condemnation in this text. It is true that the object of κατέκρινεν is ἁμαρτίαν, but Paul adds that God condemned sin ἐν τῇ σαρκί. Accordingly, Gathercole rightly notes that while it is correct to say that sin is punished here, “the location of that punishment and condemnation” is “the flesh of Jesus.”⁷⁶ Thus, to separate the condemnation of sin from the locus of the condemnation (the flesh of Jesus) is to drive a wedge where the text simply will not allow division.

Second, Travis seems to ignore the forensic nature of κατέκρινεν in order to allow for his desired interpretation in this text. Travis notes that in Rom. 8:3 sin is “‘condemned’, i.e., destroyed, done away with.”⁷⁷ Thus, he concludes that God was merely destroying sin. But κατακρίνω does not mean “destroy” but to “pronounce a sentence after determination of guilt.”⁷⁸ In Paul’s writings, it is used consistently in a forensic manner denoting the carrying out of the judicial sentence of condemnation (Rom 2:1; 8:34; 14:23; 1 Cor 11:32).⁷⁹ Furthermore, condemnation in Romans up to this point is followed by punishment.⁸⁰ Paul teaches in chapters 2-3 that the “judgment of God

⁷⁶Gathercole, “Justified by Faith; Justified by His Blood,” 177; see also Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 486-87; Jeffery, Ovey, Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 86; Moo, *Romans*, 480-81; against, Byrne, *Romans*, 237; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 213.

⁷⁷Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 197.

⁷⁸BDAG, 519. They cite no instances where the verb should be rendered “destroy” or “eliminate.”

⁷⁹So Moo, *Romans*, 480-81; Kevin W. McFadden, “The Fulfillment of the Law’s *Dikaiōma*,” *JETS* 52, no. 3 (2009): 495 n. 53. Schreiner (*Romans*, 402) and Murray (*Romans*, 274-75) understand κατακρίνω to convey the meaning of breaking the power of sin in Rom 8:3. However, neither acknowledges the possible meaning of “destroy.”

⁸⁰Büschel argues that when God is the subject, κατέκρινω denotes both the “passing of sentence” and the execution of that sentence. Friedrich Büschel, “κατακρίνω,” *TDNT*, vol. 3, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965).

rightly falls” on those who are condemned (2:1-2) as God will “inflict wrath” (3:5) “on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed” (2:5). In Romans 5, as Paul speaks of the benefit of justification, he speaks of being saved “from the wrath of God” (5:9), which was the impending judgment of those who stood condemned. When Paul, then, employs this notion of sin being condemned in the flesh of Jesus, by his sacrificial death, it is difficult to avoid the understanding that, in his flesh, Jesus bears the wrath of God that was due sinners.⁸¹ Therefore, it is best to reject the notion that for God to “condemn” sin in the flesh of Jesus denotes merely that God destroyed or did away with sin.

Forensic atonement and transformative salvation. Finally, the traditional understanding of Romans 8:3 has been challenged more broadly in the charge that forensic categories cannot account for the transformative elements in salvation. This charge is illustrated in the quote by Green in the opening chapter of this study. He argues,

The prevailing model of the atonement, focused as it is on the individual, on a

⁸¹ Green and Baker (*Recovering the Scandal*, 63) have argued that the cross addresses the problem of “human bias toward sin,” but Wright has suggested that the true bias to be dealt with may lie within those refusing to acknowledge punishment as a part of the atonement. Arguing that in the cross God deals “punitively, with sins,” he writes, “The idea of punishment as part of the atonement is itself deeply controversial; horrified rejection of the mere suggestion has led on the part of some to an unwillingness to discern any allusion to Isaiah 40-55 in Paul. But it is exactly this idea that Paul states, *clearly and unambiguously*, in 8:3, when he says that God ‘condemned sins in the flesh’—i.e., the flesh of Jesus. (Wright, *Romans*, 476, emphasis added).

Wright later could be perceived as rejecting penal substitution in this text, rejecting the thought “that God desired to punish someone and decided to punish Jesus on everyone’s behalf” (ibid., 578). But in light of Wright’s comments that “sin’s condemnation has been effected in the cross of his Son” (ibid., 576) and that “the ‘condemnation’ spoken of here is the final judgment that God, the righteous judge, will mete out at the last” (ibid., 575), it seems better to understand Wright is rejecting a simplistic understanding of God acting arbitrarily and capriciously in allowing his Son to bear the judgment for sin. However, it should be acknowledged that Wright is confusing and at times appears to be contradicting other statements he himself has made (even within a few pages).

forensic judgment, and on the moment of justification, is an obstacle to a thoroughgoing soteriology oriented toward holiness of life. That is, an exaggerated focus on an objective atonement and on salvation as transaction undermines any emphasis on salvation as transformation, and it obscures the . . . cosmological dimensions of salvation. If the purpose of God will be actualized in the restoration of all things, then how is this purpose served by a theory of penal substitutionary atonement?⁸²

The present study seeks to answer this challenge in relation to the transformation of the cosmos as a whole. However, it is clear that Green's charge extends to the transformation of those individuals who benefit from Christ's atoning work as well.

Though Green does not specifically mention Romans 8:3, the reason it is fitting to note this challenge while examining this verse is because the issues of transformation within the individual and the forensic nature of Christ's death come into contact in Romans 8:1-4. Therefore, if Green sees an understanding of the atonement which focuses on a "forensic judgment" to be "an obstacle" to a soteriology that is "oriented toward holiness of life," then it is fair to assume that one cannot acknowledge both penal substitution and the transformational nature of salvation for the individual in these verses. How should one, then, answer Green's challenge?

One way of dealing with Green's charge is simply to claim that his proposed conundrum does not come in to play in this text. That is, one could argue that this text strictly deals in forensic categories. Thus, while one might acknowledge that Green's charge deserves an answer, it serves only as a red-herring as one seeks to discern the nature of Christ's atoning work according to these verses. Such a position would argue that Paul does not speak of the transformation of individuals and the fruit borne by that transformation in their lives in 8:1-4. Rather, Paul keeps his conversation focused on

⁸²Green, "Must We Imagine?," 166.

merely forensic elements which have been accomplished by Christ's life and death (i.e., his active and passive obedience).

This understanding of these verses has been articulated well by Moo, who argues that “the righteous requirement of the law” in 8:4a is the perfect obedience of Christ which is imputed to those who believe.⁸³ Thus (according to Moo), Paul argues in 8:1-2 that the verdict of condemnation that stood against believers before faith in Christ has now been removed so that they have been delivered from “the penalty that sin exacts.”⁸⁴ Because this condemnation has been removed, believers are delivered from the realm in which sin and death rule (5:17, 21).⁸⁵ Moo, then, argues that this freedom from condemnation is rooted in the death of Christ (8:3). That is, the reason condemnation no longer hangs over those in Christ is because their deserved condemnation has been poured out on Christ at the cross, and the reason sin and death no longer reign over believers is because the ability of sin and death to rule is rooted in the verdict of condemnation. When this verdict of condemnation is removed, sin and death are no longer able to reign (6:6-10) and the power of sin is broken.⁸⁶

Then, moving from 8:3 to 8:4a, Moo does not transition from the forensic work of Christ on behalf of believers but understands the “righteous requirement of the law” in a similar manner. He argues that what the law “weakened by the flesh, could not do” (8:2) was “to free people from ‘the law of sin and death’—to procure righteousness

⁸³Moo, *Romans*, 483-84.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 472.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 477.

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, 481.

and life.”⁸⁷ Why was the law unable to procure righteousness and life? The law’s weakness is rooted in humanity’s inability to obey the law perfectly (i.e., “weakened by the flesh”). That is, because no one was able to obey the demands of the law perfectly, the law was unable to grant life. Therefore, when Paul refers to “the righteous requirement of the law” being “fulfilled in us,” he is referring to the perfect obedience of Christ which belongs to believers through their union with Christ. Moo summarizes, “[Jesus] fulfilled the law; and, in him, believers also fulfill the law—perfectly, so that they may be pronounced ‘righteous,’ free from ‘condemnation.’”⁸⁸

If Moo is right, the forensic nature of Christ’s work dominates these verses, which teach that not only is Christ’s death focused on forensic realities (in that he pays the penalty deserved by those condemned) but that his obedient life meets a forensic demand as well. Jesus’ perfect obedience is legally necessary so that the demands of the law might be perfectly fulfilled by him on behalf of the believer.⁸⁹ Thus, Green’s charge (while needing to be answered) does not need to be addressed in explaining this specific text.

However, a number of commentators argue that the “righteous requirement of the law” in 8:4a refers to the obedience of Christians,⁹⁰ and the reasons put forward for

⁸⁷Ibid., 483.

⁸⁸Ibid., 484.

⁸⁹It should be noted that this is indeed a soteriological function of Jesus’ perfect obedience to the Father whether or not “the righteous requirement of the law” is understood in the manner articulated by Moo.

⁹⁰For example, Schreiner, *Romans*, 405-07; Paul Achtemeier, *Romans*, Interpretation (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 134; Murray, *Romans*, 283; Ziesler, *Paul’s Letter to the Romans*, 206-08; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 423-24; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:383–84.

such an interpretation are convincing.⁹¹ Is there, then, a manner in which one can argue that Paul speaks of Jesus' death in forensic categories in 8:3 while discussing the transformative effects of salvation in 8:4a without compromising the flow of the text or providing a theologically incoherent solution? Indeed, there is.

Illustrating the connection between a forensic atonement and the transformative effects in the individual does not require one to depart from Moo's explanation of verses 1-2. In these verses Paul does indeed argue that the sentence of condemnation that stood over those outside of Christ has now been removed. This has significant repercussions when one remembers that it is the verdict of condemnation which upholds the reign of death over humanity (5:12-21). Therefore, in order for death's dominion over individuals to be thwarted, the verdict of condemnation is necessarily removed. It is, therefore, not only logical but anticipated that, after speaking of the removal of condemnation from individuals in 8:1, Paul would illustrate its result in 8:2. And this is exactly what he does, proclaiming that the Spirit has set believers free from the power⁹² of sin and death.

In 8:3, then, Paul mentions how it is that God has removed condemnation from individuals, thus providing verse 3 as the ground for the declaration in verse 1. The

⁹¹McFadden ("The Fulfillment of the Law's *Dikaiōma*," 486-90) argues that the view that the righteous requirement of the law is supported by the immediate context of 8:1-4a, wherein Christian obedience is the result of freedom from condemnation; by the following verses (8:4b-11), where the discussion concerns walking by the Spirit and pleasing God; by the broader patterns of Rom 5-8, where legal realities have transformative effects; and by fulfillment language, which Paul typically uses when speaking of believers walking in obedience.

⁹²Paul actually writes that the Spirit has set believers free from the "law" (νόμου) of sin and death." However, Moo makes a convincing argument that νόμος should be understood as "power" or "binding authority" in Rom 8:2. Moo, *Romans*, 473-77. Similarly, Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:364-65, 376; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 482-83; Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 522-23; Byrne, *Romans*, 235-36; against Schreiner, *Romans*, 400; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 416-17.

answer provided by Paul is that God sent his Son into the world “in the likeness of sinful flesh and for a sin offering” and “condemned sin in the flesh” of Jesus. Therefore, God provides the ground for the removal of condemnation through the forensic work of his Son on the cross. Because Christ bore God’s condemnation against sin on the cross, believers are freed from the condemnation that was justly theirs. For this reason Paul is able to declare in verse 1 that there is no condemnation for those who are *in Christ Jesus*. As believers are united with Christ by faith what is true of him is now true of them.⁹³ And because condemnation has been fully exhausted in him, it has been fully exhausted toward those in him.⁹⁴ Thus, God justly removes condemnation from believers. Accordingly, this text affirms penal substitutionary atonement.

However, Paul goes on to show the result of Christ’s penalty-bearing death in 8:4a. Since Christ has borne the condemnation deserved by guilty sinners, “the righteous requirement of the law” is now fulfilled in believers. But if this is a reference to the obedience of individual Christians, then it means that a transformation has taken effect. Furthermore, if verse 4a explains the result of verse 3, then one can say that the transformative result in believers’ lives flows out of the atoning work of Christ on the cross as he bore the condemnation deserved by sinners.⁹⁵ How do these two realities then

⁹³This description of the benefit of believers’ union with Christ is found almost identically in Clowney and Wright. See Edmund P. Clowney, “The Biblical Doctrine of Justification by Faith,” in *Right with God: Justification in the Bible and the World*, ed. D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 47; Wright, *Climax of the Covenant*, 48.

⁹⁴Though Cranfield speaks in terms of general atonement (as opposed to particular redemption), he communicates the accomplishment of Christ’s death well, writing, “That Paul had in mind Christ’s death as the event in which the full weight of God’s wrath against sin . . . was, in the flesh of Christ, that is, in His human nature, so effectively brought to bear upon all the sin of all mankind, as to rule out its ever having to be brought to bear upon it in any other flesh—this is scarcely to be doubted.” Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:383.

relate?

The answer to this question is perhaps now obvious and has already been noted briefly in addressing the connection between verses 1-2.⁹⁶ Paul has already argued in 5:12 that the personal sin of human beings is the result of the dominion of death over those who bear condemnation in Adam. Thus, individuals' sins are the result of the rule of death which is itself the result of the legal verdict of condemnation.⁹⁷ If this legal verdict of condemnation is removed through the atoning work of Christ, then one would expect it to be manifested through the personal transformation of individuals (whose personal actions were the result of that legal verdict). This is precisely what Paul shows in 8:4a. The result of removing the verdict of condemnation through the substitutionary death of Christ is that believers now live in such a way that "the righteous requirement of the law [is] fulfilled" in them.⁹⁸ The transformation within believers is the evidence that this verdict of condemnation that once hung over them has been removed. Thus, the forensic nature of Christ's work is the necessary ground for the transformation within the lives of individual believers. Therefore, it is not only acceptable but necessary within the flow of Paul's argument in Romans 5-8 to understand Paul to teach penal substitution in

⁹⁵So Schreiner, *Romans*, 408; McFadden, "The Fulfillment of the Law's *Dikaiōma*," 496; Stott, *Romans*, 220-21. Moo clearly sees the connection between Christ's atoning work in v. 3 and the result in v. 4, but he does not understand the "righteous requirement of the law" as believers' obedience.

⁹⁶Which should not be surprising, since vv. 3-4 function by explaining and clarifying the argument of vv. 1-2; see McFadden, "The Fulfillment of the Law's *Dikaiōma*," 487.

⁹⁷See chap. 2 of this study, where this point is illustrated and argued in greater detail from Rom 5:12-21.

⁹⁸This, of course, does not mean that believers now live perfectly obedient to the Lord's commands. Elsewhere, when Paul speaks of believers "fulfilling" the law, it is clear that he does not have in mind their perfect obedience. See, for example, Rom 13:8 and Gal 6:2 where Paul cannot be thought to suggest that believers perfectly love one another or perfectly bear one another's burdens.

8:3 with the anticipated results of a transformed life in 8:4a.

**God Made Him to Be Sin:
2 Corinthians 5:21**

With language very similar to that of Romans 8:3, Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “For our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” It is not difficult to imagine that many have understood this text to teach penal substitution.⁹⁹ By noting that God made the sinless one “to be sin,” Paul is proclaiming that God imputed sinners’ trespasses to Christ so that he might bear their penalty in the cross and so that those united to him by faith might be free from sin’s condemnation and counted righteous. Thus, the text pictures the “great exchange” of believers’ sin for the righteousness of God in Christ. Christ bears believers’ penalty and they are credited with his perfect righteousness.¹⁰⁰

The nature of reconciliation. There are a few challenges to this interpretation of this text as well that have been noted by opponents of penal substitution. The first is that those who understand this verse to suggest that God provides Christ as a substitute

⁹⁹So, for example, Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 449-56; Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ*, 81-83; Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 133-34; idem, “The Vindication of Imputation,” 69-73; Gaffin, “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus,” 158-59; Peterson, “Atonement in the New Testament,” 36-39; Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 577; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 148-51; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 142-43; Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God’s Glory in Christ*, 201-02; Jerry Bridges and Bob Bevington, *The Great Exchange: My Sin for His Righteousness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 148-50.

¹⁰⁰Instead of seeing δικαιοσύνη θεου as the imputed gift of righteousness, Wright understands it to refer to God’s covenant faithfulness that was manifested in Paul’s ministry (N. T. Wright, “On Becoming the Righteousness of God: 2 Corinthians 5:21,” in *Pauline Theology*, vol. 2: *1-2 Corinthians*, ed. David M. Hay [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993], 200-08), but Harris (who understands it to denote the gift of righteousness imputed to the believer) has noted a number of problems with this understanding (Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 455-56 n. 207). For additional argument against Wright’s view, see Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 174-83.

object for his wrath misunderstand the fundamental reason why reconciliation is needed. Green notes, “What is needed, then, is not a transformation of God’s disposition toward the unrighteous and the ungodly but rather a transformation on the human side of the equation.”¹⁰¹ Thus, opponents of penal substitution will point out that Paul does not envision God needing to be reconciled to man but rather man to God.¹⁰² And it is indeed true that the consistent declaration in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 is that God has provided a means for *man* to be reconciled to God—not the other way around (5:18-20). Nor is this passage some exception within the New Testament. Nowhere does the New Testament speak explicitly of God being reconciled to man.¹⁰³ Therefore, it could be suggested, if penal substitution depends on the notion that God is upholding his own retributive justice in the cross so that he might justly justify sinners, then it is fundamentally flawed, seeing God as the object of the cross when the fundamental problem is “human bias toward sin.”¹⁰⁴

In response, though 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 does not mention God being reconciled to man but only man to God, it does shed light on the nature of the problem

¹⁰¹Green, “Must We Imagine?,” 163-64.

¹⁰²See, for example, Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 59.

¹⁰³Morris acknowledges this reality while suggesting the reason for this. He writes, “The New Testament must be allowed to speak for itself, and when it does so we are immediately struck by the fact that God is never said in so many words to be reconciled to man. Almost always He is the subject of the verb and is said to reconcile man to Himself. This manner of speaking puts emphasis on the truth that the process of reconciliation originates with God” (Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 220). In line with Morris’s phrase “in so many words,” Carson warns against the theologian concentrating merely on word groups, noting, “The biblical scholar who is narrowly constrained by the exegetical field of discourse may be in danger of denying that it is proper to speak of God being reconciled to us.” Carson also warns against the theologian attempting to tie this notion to the wrong texts (Carson, “The Vindication of Imputation,” 49-50). Carson’s entire essay is helpful on this point (ibid., 46-78).

¹⁰⁴Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 63.

between man and God. In 5:19, Paul writes that “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them.” Therefore, reconciliation between God and man is dependent on the legal reality of God not counting believers’ sins against them.¹⁰⁵ One may, then, appropriately ask, “What would be the result of God continuing to count men’s trespasses against them?” The answer, of course, is that those whose sins are counted against them bear the wrath and fury of God on the day of wrath when God’s righteous judgment will be revealed and he renders to each one according to his works (Rom 2:5-6, 8). Paul has already made abundantly clear that the judgment of God rightly falls on them and that they will not escape it (Rom 2:2-3). To suggest, then, that the cross need only address man’s bias toward sin for reconciliation to occur ignores the reality that reconciliation depends on *God’s* decisive action of not counting men’s trespasses against them.

This issue is also given added clarity from Paul’s argument in a parallel passage—Romans 5:1-11. These verses contain the only other occurrence of the verb καταλλάσσω in the New Testament when used in relation to God¹⁰⁶ and one of the two occurrences of the noun καταλλαγή (cf. Rom 11:15).¹⁰⁷ What one finds in Romans 5:1-11 is a similar argument of the relational blessing dependent on one’s forensic standing

¹⁰⁵Rightly, Peterson notes, “A relational blessing (‘reconciliation with God’) rests on forensic forgiveness (v. 19 ‘not counting their trespasses against them’ . . .).” Peterson, “Atonement in the New Testament,” 36. Cf. Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 133-34; Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 228-30.

¹⁰⁶In 1 Cor 7:11 Paul speaks of a wife’s being reconciled to her husband.

¹⁰⁷I. Howard Marshall, *Jesus the Saviour: Studies in New Testament Theology* (London: SPCK, 1990), 262. Morris apparently missed Paul’s reference in 1 Cor 7:11, since he notes that the verb καταλλάσσω only occurs in Rom 5:10f. and 2 Cor 5:18-21. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 214.

before God. Paul argues that believers have been “reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (5:10), rooting man’s reconciliation with his Maker in Christ’s atoning work. Furthermore, Paul describes the effect of Christ’s death as the believer now being justified (“we have now been justified by his blood,” 5:9). Therefore, one may conclude that in Romans 5:8-11 reconciliation is dependent on the justification of the believer before God.¹⁰⁸ But why is justification necessary for reconciliation to occur? Paul answers that since believers have been justified they are saved “from the wrath of God” (5:9). That is, the wrath of God hung over sinners prior to their justification, as God stood against them as the just judge.¹⁰⁹ God himself, however, addressed the situation through the death of Christ (i.e., “*God* shows his love . . .,” 5:8). While they were still sinners, Christ died for them so that they might be “justified by his blood” and “saved by him from the wrath of God” (5:8-9). Thus, the wrath of God was dealt with by justifying sinners which was accomplished through the death of Christ. Likewise reconciliation was also accomplished through the death of Christ (5:10). Therefore, Romans 5:8-11 views reconciliation as God’s work of justifying sinners through the death of his Son so that they might be saved from his wrath.

In both cases (Rom 5 and 2 Cor 5), the issue from which individuals needed to be saved was God’s wrath which rightly hung over them as sinners. Furthermore, in both

¹⁰⁸On the close connection between justification and reconciliation in these verses, see Moo, *Romans*, 311-312; Murray, *Romans*, 172-73; Schreiner, *Romans*, 263; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 268; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:267; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 401.

¹⁰⁹Noting that man is God’s enemy, Morris rightly observes that “when sinful man is content to let bygones be bygones . . . God (through the mouth of his servants) speaks of an enmity, it is hard to see how it can be maintained that there is no enmity from the side of God. The point is that it is God’s demand for holiness which causes the enmity.” Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 223. Cf. Moo, *Romans*, 312; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 401; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:267; Schreiner, *Romans*, 264.

cases, what needed to happen was God changing the legal standing of sinners. In 2 Corinthians 5:19 this is stated in terms of non-imputation (i.e., “not counting their trespasses against them”) while in Romans 5:9 this is stated in terms of justification (i.e., “we have now been justified”). In neither case, however, does this change in legal standing describe foremost a change in the attitude of the sinner “but it points to a peace as stemming from the . . . removal of the guilt for sin that from God’s side is a barrier to his fellowship with sinners”¹¹⁰—guilt which made them deserving recipients of God’s wrath. Finally, in both cases, this wrath is removed “through the death of [God’s] Son” (Rom 5:10), as God made Christ to be sin (2 Cor 5:21) and so bear on behalf of sinners the divine wrath that was due them. Thus, it is through the atonement that the barrier of guilt and wrath that stood between God and man has been removed.

This understanding of the atonement in 5:21 also makes best sense of Paul’s comment that God has reconciled individuals to himself while leaving his servants a continuing ministry of reconciliation. By noting that “God . . . through Christ reconciled us to himself” (2 Cor 5:18), Paul makes reference to that which Christ has already accomplished (i.e., through his death).¹¹¹ However, Paul also declares that there is a ministry of reconciliation still carried out by Christ’s servants in the present as “we implore [individuals] on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20). There is, then, a work of reconciliation that has been accomplished (5:18) and one that continues (5:20). Moreover, the logic of these verses leads the reader to understand the continuing

¹¹⁰Gaffin, “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus,” 159.

¹¹¹That is, “διὰ Χριστου” in v. 18 should be understood as “through the death of Christ,” especially in light of what follows in v. 21.

work of reconciliation to be dependent on the accomplished work of reconciliation. That is, Christ's servants can implore others to be reconciled to God because God has decisively accomplished a work of reconciliation through Christ's death.

Green suggests, however, that the work of reconciliation focuses upon humanity's bend or desire for sin. He believes that "the sacrifice . . . offered by Jesus is understood by Paul to entail the final solution to the problem of *the human bias toward sin*."¹¹² The reason Green sees this as sufficient for reconciliation is because "What is needed . . . is not a transformation of God's disposition toward the unrighteous and the ungodly but rather a transformation on the human side of the equation."¹¹³ Though this understanding may work out logically in Green's mind, it falters in light of the text. If the accomplished work of reconciliation on which the present work of reconciliation rests is simply that the Lord removed the human bias toward sin, then the present work of reconciliation is hopeless.

The reason the present work of reconciliation would be hopeless in this scenario is because regardless of man's attitude toward sin in the present, he still awaits the day of God's righteous judgment. On that day of judgment, God will render to each man *according to what he has done* (Rom 2:6). Therefore, even if Christ's death served to remove from a man's heart all desire for sin, he would still stand under God's wrath for the evil he had committed to that point.¹¹⁴ The fact that he now had no desire for sin would do nothing to address his guilt and the righteous judgment of God that awaited

¹¹²Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 63 (italics added).

¹¹³Green, "Must We Imagine," 163-64.

¹¹⁴Even if he commits no more sin the rest of his life.

him. The only accomplished work of reconciliation (5:18) that would provide a basis for a present work of reconciliation (5:20) would be that which addressed man's guilt and God's righteous judgment for that guilt.

That is, if God's wrath, which rightly stood against the sinner for his evil works, has already been poured out on Christ at the cross, then (and only then) is the present work of reconciliation possible. Sinners may be justified by faith and therein reconciled to God (5:20) because the condemnation and punishment for sin that stood against them has been borne by another (5:18). The present work of reconciliation demands that the accomplished work of reconciliation justly dealt with God's wrath against sin. This is the only understanding of Christ's atoning work that satisfies the logic of 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, and it is the precise meaning of penal substitution.

Wrath as intrinsic consequences. It is also helpful to show again at this point that these verses will not allow for the reductionistic understanding of God's wrath addressed in chapter three of this study. In Travis's earlier work, he focused his attack against perceiving penal substitution in this text by noting that wrath is not explicitly mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.¹¹⁵ However, in his updated edition of this chapter he does an about-face on this point. He first quotes Marshall, who states that "It is hard to understand this [Christ's becoming sin for us] in any other way than that in dying Christ exhausted the effects of the divine wrath against sin."¹¹⁶ Then, Travis adds,

Although wrath is not mentioned in the context, this is an appropriate interpretation in view of Paul's reference in the wider context to Christ's universal judgment as part of the motivation for his apostolic ministry (2 Cor. 5:10-11) and his emphasis

¹¹⁵Travis, "Christ as Bearer of Divine Judgment," 337.

¹¹⁶ Marshall, *Jesus the Saviour*, 264, quoted in Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 187.

on the importance of reconciliation (5:18-6:2).¹¹⁷

However dangerously close Travis comes to defending penal substitution here, the reader is reminded only a few pages later, that “this is not the same as to say that [Christ] bore our punishment . . . judgement is not inflicted by God ‘from outside’, but is the intrinsic outworking, under God’s control of the consequences of human choices and actions.”¹¹⁸ Thus, Travis distances himself from those proposing penal substitution as the teaching in this text.

Travis’s understanding of divine wrath has already been shown to be reductionistic in light of the whole of Scripture in chapter three of this study and unable to account for the strong language of Romans 1:18-20 in this present chapter. However, there is another reason for dismissing Travis’s reductionistic understanding of the penalty Christ bore on the cross when one considers Isaiah 52:13-53:12 as a likely background for Paul’s teaching in 2 Corinthians 5:16-21.¹¹⁹ Hoad has noted that while the linguistic

¹¹⁷Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 187.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 199.

¹¹⁹See John Hoad, “Some New Testament References to Isaiah 53,” *ExpTim* 68 (1957): 254-55; Stanislas Lyonnet and Léopold Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice: A Biblical and Patristic Study*, AnBib 48 (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1970), 228; W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God*, SBT (London: SCM, 1957), 96 n. 441; Otto Betz, “Jesus and Isaiah 53,” in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H. Bellinger, Jr. and William R. Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 76-77; G. K. Beale, “The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1,” *NTS* 35, no. 4 (1989): 559-60; Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 456; Seyoon Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective: Second Thoughts on the Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 237; Paul Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 313; Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 168-70; Scott J. Haffemann, *2 Corinthians*, NIVAp (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 247; Peterson, “Atonement in the New Testament,” 37; Dunn and Das also see this as a possibility (James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 217; A. Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001], 131); Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 133-34. McLean cites Cullman in arguing that there is at least “no clear reference to Isa. 53.6” in 2 Cor 5:21 (B. Hudson McLean, *The Cursed Christ: Mediterranean Expulsion Rituals and Pauline Soteriology*, JSNTSup [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996], 108 n. 10). However, it is hard to discern where he gathers this from Cullman’s work. Though

connections are not overwhelming, the conceptual threefold pattern found in Isaiah 53:9-11 (that the servant, (a) who had done no wrong, (b) was made an offering for sins (c) that others might come into a right standing with God¹²⁰) is pictured clearly in Paul's statement that God "made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).¹²¹ If this is indeed the case, then it is difficult to understand Paul's words as suggesting something other than the idea that Christ bore the divine punishment for sin.¹²²

Isaiah 53 and divine wrath. There can be little (if any) doubt that the New Testament writers utilize Isaiah 53¹²³ when describing the significance of Christ's death.¹²⁴ First Peter 2:22-25 and Romans 4:25 (both of which speak of the significance

Cullman notes that Paul provides relatively few quotations from Is 53 in his writings, he writes, "II Cor. 5:21 concerning him who 'knew no sin' clearly refers to Isa. 53:6." Oscar Cullman, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. Shirley C. Guthrie and Charles A. M. Hall, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), 76.

¹²⁰... although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for sin . . . by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities" (Isa 53:9-11).

¹²¹Hoad, "Some New Testament References to Isaiah 53," 254. Pate, however, has noted linguistic connections, writing, "Lexically, the phrase, ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἁμαρτίαν in 5:21 recalls Isa 53:10, δῶτε περὶ ἁμαρτίας. Furthermore Paul's usage of λογζόμενος in 2 Cor 5:19 [*sic*] where it is declared that God *has not* counted to the believer his sin can be compared to Isa 53:4, 12 [*sic*], where the many's sin *was* counted, ἐλογισάμεθα, to the servant." C. Marvin Pate, *Adam Christology as the Exegetical & Theological Substructure of 2 Corinthians 4:7-5:21* (New York: University Press of America, 1991), 142 (emphasis original).

¹²²Even if Paul does not allude to Isa 53 in 2 Cor 5:21, it is difficult to see how one might read Isa 53 as a text prophesying the atoning work of Christ without understanding the text in terms of penal substitution.

¹²³I use "Isaiah 53" often to refer to Isa 52:13-53:12 throughout this section.

¹²⁴Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach point to Morna Hooker as claiming that "the [NT] writers do not appeal to Isaiah 53 to inform their understanding of the meaning of Christ's death at all" (Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 63). And they are indeed correct in noting that Hooker makes this very claim concerning the seven passages she examines which include the phrase "it is written." They

of Christ's death)¹²⁵ contain references or quotations to these verses in Isaiah.¹²⁶

Therefore, it is no stretch to suggest that the New Testament authors perceive that the nature of the servant's suffering in Isaiah 53 describes the nature of Christ's suffering on the cross. The weight of this claim is only felt, however, when one considers the precise nature of the servant's suffering.

The servant of Isaiah 52:13-53:13 has long been identified as the Son of God¹²⁷ who came and accomplished reconciliation on behalf of God's people. As early as Acts 8, Philip answered the Eunuch's question, "Does the prophet say this about himself or about someone else?" by taking this very text and telling him the "good news about Jesus" (Acts 8:34-35).¹²⁸ Therefore, if Jesus is to be identified with the servant of Isaiah

are also correct in noting that Hooker seems to downplay the significance of seeing the meaning of the atonement flowing from Isa 53 as used in 1 Pet 2:22-25 and seems to sidestep the evidence from 1 Pet 2:22-25 (*ibid.*, 64). However, by largely sidestepping the implications of Peter's use of Isa 53 in 1 Pet 2:22-25 and acknowledging that Paul *does* utilize Is 53 in a theological manner in Rom 4:25 to articulate the significance of Christ's work, it is not entirely accurate to claim that Hooker's position is that the NT writers "do not appeal to Isaiah 53 to inform their understanding of the meaning of Christ's death at all." Rather, it seems that Hooker suggests it is rare for them to do so but does appear in Rom 4:25 so that she ends her article saying that she is much closer than she was forty years ago to suggesting that Paul may have been the first to use Isa 53 to explain the significance of Christ's atoning work. Morna D. Hooker, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53 to Interpret His Mission Begin with Jesus?," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H. Bellinger, Jr. and William R. Farmer (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998), 90-93, 101-03.

¹²⁵Hooker, who seems slow to acknowledge that the NT writers use Isa 53 when expounding the significance of Christ's work, notes that though Peter mainly points to Isa 53 to articulate Christ's death as an example to follow "progresses to the idea that they [Christ's sufferings] have an atoning value—an idea which, strictly speaking, is not relevant to his argument." Hooker, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53," 92.

¹²⁶Travis points to Isa 53:6 and 12 (LXX) in noting similar language to that which is used by Paul in Rom 4:25 and 8:32 (Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 196). Heb 9:28 is another text which speaks of the significance of Christ's work with probable reference to Isa 53. Isa 53:12 reads, "αὐτὸς ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν," while Heb 9:28 reads, "τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἀμαρτίας."

¹²⁷Justin serves as a witness to the early church fathers' conviction that the servant should be identified with Jesus (Justin Martyr *Dialogue with Trypho* ch. 13, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, in *The Apostolic Fathers, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus*, ANF, American ed., vol. 1 [Buffalo: Christian Literature, 1885; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004], 200-01), while it is a near consensus position among recent commentators.

53, and if that chapter describes the servant's suffering in terms of penal substitution, then it is strong indication that the New Testament writers themselves understood Jesus' atonement as a work of penal substitution.¹²⁹ Before that syllogism is accepted, however, it needs to be shown that Isaiah 53 teaches penal substitution.

Though some have argued against seeing substitution as an appropriate understanding of the servant's suffering in Isaiah 53,¹³⁰ Travis's contention is not with substitution but with the imagery of God inflicting punishment on his Son "from the outside." In response, it is clear that the servant bears the judgment of the sins of his

¹²⁸Hooker has pointed out that the quotation of Isa 53:7-8 in Acts 8:32-33 intentionally breaks off at a point where Isaiah describes the significance of the servant's suffering. She argues that it is suggesting too much to claim that Luke anticipated his readers supplying the rest of the chapter beyond that which was specifically quoted from Isa 53. She goes so far as to say, "If [Luke] had been trying deliberately to avoid the theme of atonement, he could not have done better!" (Hooker, "Did the Use of Isaiah 53," 91). By this she does not mean that Luke was consciously rejecting these lines in Isa 53 that are not quoted but simply including those lines that fit his purpose (Morna D. Hooker, "Response to Mikeal Parsons," in *Jesus and the Suffering Servant: Isaiah 53 and Christian Origins*, ed. William H. Bellinger, Jr. and William R. Farmer [Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998], 121). However, the fact that Luke understood the servant of Isa 53 to be Jesus (which is evident with the fact that he notes that Philip answers the eunuch's question by telling him the good news about *Jesus*) means that he would have read that chapter in terms of Jesus' atoning work. It is too much to suggest that Luke would have read of the servant's vicarious suffering in Isa 53, identified the servant as Jesus, and yet failed to understand the significance of Jesus' death in light of the significance of the servant's suffering identified in Isa 53. Furthermore, the fact that Philip "beginning with this Scripture," "told him the good news about Jesus" [ἐὐηγγελίσασατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν] demands that Philip mentioned to the eunuch the atoning work of Christ, for that is essential to the good news itself. I am not here suggesting that Hooker dismisses the atoning work of Christ as central to the gospel message but simply that she claims too much to suggest that Luke (or Philip) would not have understood Isa 53 as informing the significance of Christ's death.

¹²⁹Furthermore, if this chapter informs Paul's writing in 2 Cor 5:18-21, it adds further support that this Pauline text should be understood to teach penal substitution.

¹³⁰Two examples here are the arguments of Whybray (R. N. Whybray, *Thanksgiving for a Liberated Prophet: An Interpretation of Isaiah 53*, JSOTSup [Sheffield: University of Sheffield, 1978]; idem, *Isaiah 40-66*, NCB [London: Olipants, 1975], 175) and Hooker ("Did the Use of Isaiah 53?," 95-98). Hooker relies on Whybray and largely agrees with him, arguing for a view of "inclusive place-taking" rather than "exclusive place-taking," or substitution. For arguments against their views and in favor of seeing substitution in this text, see David Peterson, "Atonement in the Old Testament," in *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet*, ed. David Peterson (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), 19-23; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 52-61; J. Alec Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah: An Introduction & Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 422-43; Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, NAC, vol. 15B (Nashville: B&H, 2009), 446-56; John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah, Chapters 40-66*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 377-96.

people. It is they who “like sheep have gone astray” and “turned every one to his own way” (53:6). Yet, Yahweh laid on *him* “the iniquity of us all” so that he was wounded “for our transgressions” and crushed “for our iniquities” (53:5-6). Therefore, the servant suffers not as one who is himself sinful or deserving of punishment. Though he “had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth” (53:9), he was “cut off out of the land of the living,” “wounded,” and “crushed” (53:5, 8, 10).¹³¹

Is it, then, appropriate to speak of the servant suffering simply “the intrinsic outworking, under God’s control, of the consequences of human choices and actions?”¹³² Carson has rightly noted that it is the “*unjust* punishment of the Servant in Isaiah 53 that is so remarkable.”¹³³ If God’s wrath is manifested merely in that which is “intrinsic” to his morally ordered world, then the servant would have suffered no judgment, for he was righteous. But he suffers because of Yahweh’s intervention, as he imputes to the servant the sins of his people,¹³⁴ so that he bears the judgment for their sins. If Travis’s understanding of divine wrath were correct, and if the servant were to bear this outworking of the consequences of human choices and actions, then it would seem

¹³¹Whybray argues that “cut off out of the land of the living” interpreted literally “almost certainly means that the Servant died” but then goes on to argue that it speaks nearly of his “nearness to death” (Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, 177). Motyer, however, has answered Whybray, noting, “Whybray can only salvage his fancy that Isaiah 53 does not require the actual death of the Servant by pleading that we need not take *from the land of the living* out of the land’ literally. But its Old Testament use is unequivocal (Pss. 27:13; 116:9; 142:5<6>; Is. 38:11; Je. 11:19): so truly did the Servant die that, like all the dead, he was removed from the world of the living.” Motyer, *Isaiah*, 434-35 (emphasis original).

¹³²Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 199.

¹³³Carson, “Atonement in Romans 3:21-26,” 134 (emphasis original). Carson makes clear that by “unjust” he does not mean that God acted unjustly but that the person who bore punishment did not deserve it (ibid.).

¹³⁴Imputation is no doubt necessary when considering that the servant bears the sins of the people. Sin cannot be understood in this case as an entity or physical reality whereby the servant is made to be sinful, for his innocence is made clear both here and in 2 Cor 5:18-21. Thus, the notion of legal imputation best fits the idea of the sinless one bearing sin, as it is legally credited to him.

necessary for the servant actually to become in his essence sinful or somehow to commit sin. Otherwise, there is nothing to trigger consequences of human choices?

This is best considered with the picture of a man who loses his arm in a traffic accident while driving drunk. He sins by getting drunk and then loses his arm in the accident. In this case, the loss of his arm would should be understood as the wrath of God in that the man would bear the intrinsic outworking of his choices and actions.¹³⁵ But how would another bear that wrath (the loss of the arm) without actually committing the same sin? If one answers that the substitute would need to get drunk and go driving himself, then this surely cannot be comparable to the suffering servant, for he does not sin. However, if one suggests that the Lord merely inflict the judgment upon the substitute that would have naturally come to him were he to have gotten drunk and wrecked his vehicle, then Travis's commitment to wrath merely being the *intrinsic* outworking of human choices is destroyed. If God inflicts wrath from outside the natural working of the world, then that wrath can no longer be labeled "intrinsic." Therefore, if the servant bears the judgment of others that would have come to them intrinsically as they received the consequences of their choices and actions, then one must necessarily understand the servant's suffering as extrinsic to the natural ordering of the world, inflicted by God from the outside.

Furthermore, Isaiah 53 makes clear that the servant suffers the penalty necessary for the benefit of his people. "Upon him was the chastisement that brought us

¹³⁵Fiddes, who agrees with Travis in understanding divine wrath as God "giving up' people to the natural consequences of their own sin" illustrates divine wrath in life similarly to what I have here, writing, "The millionaire who cuts himself off from all human fellowship, trusting no one and living in island suites at the top of hotel buildings, dies on an island of his own self." Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989), 90-91.

peace” (53:5). Therefore, the chastisement (or punishment¹³⁶) that was deserved because of “our iniquities” came upon him. He bore the chastisement necessary for there to be peace. It seems difficult to perceive this in any other way than that the servant bears the penalty merited by humanity’s rebellion against God so that there might be reconciliation. Additionally, when that penalty which the servant bears is necessarily inflicted by God from outside of the natural working of the world, Travis’s understanding of the judgment borne by Christ must be dismissed in place of the traditional understanding of penal substitutionary atonement.¹³⁷ Therefore, if Isaiah 53 serves as the likely background for 2 Corinthians 5:21,¹³⁸ then further support is added to the understanding that this important Pauline text on the atonement teaches penal substitution.

By Becoming a Curse for Us: Galatians 3:13

With language similar to the texts examined above, Paul writes in Galatians

¹³⁶Punishment is a term Travis goes to great pains to avoid when describing God’s wrath being poured out on Christ. However, Oswalt has noted that “while *mûsar* does not always imply ‘punishment,’ it frequently does (cf. Job 5:17; Prov. 22:15; 23:13 . . .).” He adds, “It is the discipline of a child by a parent up to and including punishment. Here [in Isa 53:5] the context demands this understanding” (Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66*, 388). Similarly, Dhorme notes that “the exact meaning of the verb in the piel is ‘to correct’ whether by words, whence ‘teach’, or by chastisement, whence ‘punish’” (E. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, trans. Harold Knight [London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967], 43). For further support for the idea of punishment with the noun מוֹסָר, see John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, WBC, vol. 25 (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 231; Motyer, *Isaiah*, 430; Smith, *Isaiah 40-66*, 450.

¹³⁷Gentry notes that “this passage clearly teaches penal substitution” (Peter J. Gentry, “The Atonement in Isaiah’s Fourth Servant Song [Isaiah 52:13-53:12],” *SBTJ* 11, no. 2 [2007]: 33) while Peterson adds, “Those who deny the theme of penal substitution in this chapter appear to be guilty of special pleading.” Peterson, “Atonement in the Old Testament,” 21.

¹³⁸Again, even if one were to dispute Isa 53 as the likely background for Paul’s writing in 2 Cor 5:18-21, it is unlikely that Paul would have understood and explained the significance of the cross in 2 Cor 5:21 in a manner different than that expounded in Isa 53 in light of the fact that (1) he would have understood the servant in Is 53 to be Jesus and (2) he was dealing with the same concepts of the righteous one bearing sins so that many might be made righteous and have peace with God.

3:13, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree.’” The language of “curse” does not simply arise in verse 13, however. Rather, it is used as an antithesis to being justified in verses 10-13.¹³⁹ Paul argues in 3:7-9 that it is those of faith who are Abraham’s offspring and blessed along with him. Additionally, Paul notes that when God declared to Abraham, “In you shall all the nations be blessed” (Gen 12:3), the Scripture was declaring the gospel, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith (3:8). Therefore, it is in the midst of arguing that all who are justified before God are justified by faith and not by works of the law¹⁴⁰ that Paul writes in 3:10, “For all who are of the works of the law¹⁴¹ are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law and do them.”¹⁴² Thus, Paul introduces the language of “curse” in 3:10 as an antithesis to the justification that comes by faith. Those who believe in Christ¹⁴³ are counted righteous (3:6) before God while

¹³⁹Notice, for example, how all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse (κατάραν) according to 3:10, while in the following verse Paul writes that no one is justified (δικαιοῦται) by the law. Therefore, Paul describes the state of being under a curse as the opposite of being justified.

¹⁴⁰Justification by faith and justification on the basis of the works of the law is Paul’s constant and consistent contrast in the letter to the Galatians. For example, a few verses prior to Paul’s comment in 3:13 that Christ became a curse for us, he notes, “We know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified” (Gal 2:16).

¹⁴¹Though the interpretation of “works of the law” has been vigorously debated, I understand this phrase as denoting the works demanded by the law. So Moo, *Romans*, 206-17; Moisés Silva, “Faith Versus Works of the Law in Galatians,” in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O’Brien, and Mark Seifrid (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 217-48; against Dunn, who sees the works of the law simply as those laws which served as boundary markers. Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 153-55.

¹⁴²“Of the works of the law” reflects my own translation of “ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἶσιν.”

¹⁴³I use the phrase “believe in Christ” because Paul writes, “We also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ” (Gal 2:16).

those who “are of the works of the law are under a curse” (3:10).

However, two questions immediately surface from verse 10. The first concerns why Paul uses the quotation of Deuteronomy 27:26 to support his argument. The second concerns why exactly those who rely on the law are cursed. Answering the first question, however, will reveal that these two questions are united.

The reason why Paul’s quotation of Deuteronomy 27:26 is baffling to interpreters is because that verse could appear to say the exact opposite of the point that Paul is making in verse 10. Deuteronomy 27:26 comes as a climax to a list of curses that begin in verse 15 and extend to verse 26 so that this final verse serves as a summary statement, showing that the curse falls on anyone who does not obey the law.¹⁴⁴ Why would Paul use this to prove that all who are of the works of the law are cursed? Kim suggests that the opposite inference would seem to be in order, namely, “all those who are *not* of the works of the law (i.e., all those who do not keep the law) are under a curse.”¹⁴⁵ So, if it is those who do not abide by all things written in the law who are cursed (according to Deut 27:26), how is it that Paul sees this as support for the claim that all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse?

The answer is hinted at in Paul’s note that the curse falls on anyone who does not abide by *all* that the law commands.¹⁴⁶ The notion that one must obey the whole law

¹⁴⁴Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 334; Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, WBC, vol. 41 (Dallas: Word, 1990), 117; Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT (forthcoming).

¹⁴⁵Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, 140 (emphasis original).

¹⁴⁶The word *πᾶσι* appears not in the MT but only in the LXX. Therefore, Kim is surely right to suggest that Paul is emphasizing the requirement to keep all the law and the impossibility thereof. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, 141 n. 59; see also Thomas R. Schreiner, “Is Perfect Obedience to the Law Possible? A Re-Examination of Galatians 3:10,” *JETS* 27, no. 2 (1984): 156.

is later used by Paul as a threat, as he writes, “I testify again to every man who accepts circumcision that he is obligated to keep the whole law” (Gal 5:3).¹⁴⁷ The reason why this statement is a threat is because Paul confirms elsewhere that all have transgressed God’s law. He writes, “None is righteous . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” so that “all, both Jews, and Greeks, are under sin” (Rom 3:9-10, 23). The only possible explanation for why Paul can declare that “the doers of the law . . . will be justified” (Rom 2:13) and then conclude that “by works of the law no human being will be justified in [God’s] sight” (Rom 3:20; cf. Gal 2:16) is because he believes that no one obeys (or is capable of obeying) the law.

Therefore, in Galatians 3:10, Paul’s argument relies on the reader supplying an unstated premise, namely, that no one does (or is capable of doing) all things written in the law.¹⁴⁸ This form of argument was not uncommon in that day, as Aristotle makes mention of this kind of syllogism, calling it an enthymeme:

The enthymeme and the example must, then, deal with what is in the main contingent, the example being an induction, and the enthymeme a syllogism, about such matters. The enthymeme must consist of few propositions, fewer often than those which make up the normal syllogism. For if any of those propositions is a

¹⁴⁷So Jason C. Meyer, *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009), 155; A. Andrew Das, *Paul and the Jews*, LPS (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003), 142; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 226-27; Timothy George, *Galatians*, NAC, vol. 30 (Nashville: B&H, 1994), 357-59; Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, 141; S. M. Baugh, “Galatians 5:1-6 and Personal Obligation: Reflections on Paul and the Law,” in *The Law Is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant*, ed. Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 263-75; VanDrunen, “Natural Law and the Works Principle under Adam and Moses,” 310.

¹⁴⁸A number of scholars think this premise is implied. See, for example, John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, in vol. 21 of *Calvin’s Commentaries*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 89; Frank J. Matera, *Galatians*, SP (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1992), 123-24; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 118; Das, *Paul and the Jews*, 36-37; Schreiner, “Is Perfect Obedience to the Law Possible?,” 151-60; Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, 129; Stephen Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 210; Silva acknowledges this premise, but believes that the missing premise is that Paul’s opponents specifically would/could not fulfill the demands of Deut 27:26. Mosés Silva, *Interpreting Galatians: Explorations in Exegetical Method*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), 231.

familiar fact, there is no need even to mention it; the hearer adds it himself. Thus, to show that Dorieus has been victor in a contest for which the prize is a crown, it is enough to say “For he has been victor in the Olympic games”, without adding “And in the Olympic games the prize is a crown”, a fact which everybody knows.¹⁴⁹

Moreover, the likelihood of Paul’s readers supplying this unstated premise is so great in light of his consistent claims that no one is righteous, all have turned aside, and all have sinned, that he would have needed to state clearly humanity’s *capability* of keeping the law if he had believed it possible and wanted his readers to assume that capability.

Therefore, Paul’s argument in Galatians 3:10 should be understood as follows:

1. Those who do not do all that the law requires are under a curse (Deut 27:26; Gal 3:10b)
2. No one does all things written in the law (unstated premise)¹⁵⁰
3. Therefore, all who are of the works of the law are under a curse (Gal 3:10a)

Then, in 3:11-12, Paul provides two more reasons from the witness of the Old Testament why no one is justified on the basis of the law. The first is that the Old Testament teaches that righteousness is by faith. Specifically Paul cites Habakkuk 2:4, writing, “The righteous shall live by faith.” Though there are debates concerning how Habakkuk 2:4 should be understood in its original context and exactly how the debated details come across into Paul’s quotation,¹⁵¹ Longenecker is undoubtedly right in

¹⁴⁹Aristotle *Rhetorica* 1.2.13 (1357a), trans. W. Rhys Roberts under the title *Rhetoric*, in *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. 2, Great Books of the Western World, vol. 8 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 596.

¹⁵⁰That is, this is unstated in Gal 3:10 but clearly stated elsewhere throughout Paul’s letters.

¹⁵¹See, for example, Seifrid’s argument in which he claims that Hab 2:4 “speaks of the one who lives by the ‘faithfulness’ of the vision of coming salvation, that is, by the promise of God.” Seifrid goes on to argue that Paul interprets this text as speaking of the faith of the righteous one and, thus, calls for faith. Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*, NSBT, vol. 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 37-38. Better, is Schreiner’s suggestion that Habakkuk calls for the righteous to have faith in God’s promises “when circumstances conspire against such trust.” Thus, Paul does not distort Habakkuk’s message but encapsulates it. Schreiner, *Galatians*, ZECNT (forthcoming).

suggesting that “the point [Paul] is making is that righteousness in this pivotal text is associated with faith.”¹⁵² The reason this is crucial is highlighted in the next verse as Paul notes that “the law is not of faith” (3:12). Rather, the law is about “doing.” Thus, Paul cites Leviticus 18:5, writing, “The one who does them shall live by them.”

Whether or not this text is understood as promising eternal life to one who does all the law¹⁵³ or simply a blessed life in the land¹⁵⁴ is not crucial, for Paul’s emphasis in the citation is not on ζήσεται but ποιήσας.¹⁵⁵ Paul’s contrast is between faith and doing, and the law is by nature antithetical to faith (“not of faith”) because it demands doing.¹⁵⁶ Thus, Paul utilizes two Old Testament citations in 3:11-12 to add further support to his argument that justification is by faith and not by doing the works of the law.

The importance of Paul’s argument in verses 10-12 lies in revealing the nature of the “curse of the law” or the “curse” which Christ became for his people, according to verse 13. Galatians 3:10-13 contains the only uses of the noun κατάρα in Paul’s writings. Verses 10-12 reveal a few things about the nature of the curse, however. First, Paul’s use

¹⁵²Longenecker actually goes on to write, “. . . with faith alone—not with the law!” However, the contrast with the law is spelled out in 3:13. Therefore, it is best to say that Paul is simply showing that righteousness comes by faith. The contrast between faith and the nature of the law is shown in the next verse. Longenecker, *Galatians*, 119.

¹⁵³R. H. Gundry, “Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul,” in *The Best in Theology*, vol. 1, ed. Paul Fromer (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, 1987), 90; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 134.

¹⁵⁴Dunn, *Paul*, 152-53.

¹⁵⁵Rightly, Moo, *Romans*, 649; T. David Gordon, “Abraham and Sinai Contrasted in Galatians 3:6-14,” in *The Law Is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant*, ed. Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2009), 247.

¹⁵⁶That is, the law’s blessing is based on performance. See Gundry, “Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul,” 90; Longenecker, *Galatians*, 120; Gordon, “Abraham and Sinai Contrasted in Galatians 3:6-14,” 247.

of Deuteronomy 27:26 as a text to ground his premise in 3:10 shows that he intended the curse language to be understood in light of the curses for disobedience addressed in Deuteronomy 27-30. As shown in chapter two of this study, the curse fell upon those who were found guilty of violating the Lord's covenant demands.¹⁵⁷ That is, the curse was God's judgment upon the guilty. Second, in these verses, Paul contrasts being cursed (or being under a curse) with being justified. Just as he reveals the antithetical nature of faith in Christ and the works of the law, so he shows the same antithesis in the results each produces. Faith in Christ brings about justification (Gal 2:16; 3:8) while being under the law brings a curse. Elsewhere in Paul's writings, he contrasts justification with condemnation (e.g., Rom 3-5 [esp. 5:12-21]; 8:33-34). Therefore, taking Paul's argument that no one is justified by the works of the law (but rather condemned) and that all who are of the works of the law are under a curse, one should assume that the curse that comes from reliance on the law is linked with the legal sentence of condemnation. Thus, as in Deuteronomy 27-30, so in Galatians 3:10-12, being cursed by God is equivalent to being condemned before him.

Finally, these verses reveal the universal nature of the curse. By reminding his readers that the curse falls on everyone who does not abide by all things written in the law, Paul reminds them of the condemnation which has fallen upon all mankind. It is indeed true that only Jews were under the Mosaic law specifically.¹⁵⁸ However, Paul

¹⁵⁷The legal nature of the covenant stipulations are made clear in that the Lord calls heaven and earth to serve as witnesses of the terms that are set forth (Deut 30:19).

¹⁵⁸This is strongly emphasized by Caneday, who wants to avoid the redemptive-historical categories from being overlooked in favor of systematic theology categories. Ardel Caneday, "The Curse of the Law and the Cross: Works of the Law and Faith in Galatians 3:1-14" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1992), 260.

makes clear that the curse for failure to obey the Lord's demands perfectly, elicited condemnation upon all humanity. That is, even the Gentiles bear condemnation for their failure to abide by God's commands, since the law is written on their hearts (Rom 2:14-15).¹⁵⁹ Thus, if individuals (Jew or Gentile) are to be redeemed, they must be redeemed from the condemnation and just judgment that bears on them as those who have not abided by all things in the law.

It is with this background that one must read Paul's declaration in 3:13 that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." In light of 3:10-12, Paul should be understood here to say that Christ bore the judgment that comes from sinners' condemnation under the law. That is, Jesus bears the divine judgment on behalf of those who merited the curse by their disobedience to God's demands. This interpretation is further supported in light of Paul's proof text from Deuteronomy 21:23, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree." Craigie helpfully describes the meaning of this verse:

Hanging was not a method of execution, but something that was done after the death of a criminal, on the same day. When the man was dead, he would be hanged on a *tree* or a "wooden post" of some kind; the gruesome sight would then serve as a warning to the population of the results of breaking those laws which were punishable by death. . . . The body was not *accursed of God* (or lit. "curse of God") because it was hanging on a tree; it was hanging on a tree because it was accursed of God. And the body was not accursed of God simply because it was dead (for all men die), but it was accursed because of the reason for the death. To break the law of God . . . was in effect to curse him; and he who cursed God would be accursed of God.¹⁶⁰

Therefore, if one was cursed of God for breaking the law of God, then it would seem that

¹⁵⁹This argument is more fully developed and supported in the pages below.

¹⁶⁰Craigie, *Deuteronomy*, 285.

Paul is saying here that Christ bore the condemnation for the failure of his people to abide by all things written in the law.

Caneday has argued more specifically, however, for seeing the idea of propitiation as the background for Paul's use of Deuteronomy 21:23.¹⁶¹ He notes that there is precedent in the Old Testament for hanging a body before the Lord so that divine wrath might be appeased.¹⁶² One such example is found in Numbers 25:1-4, which records the arousal of the Lord's anger against Israel as they had been seduced by Moabite women. What is particularly interesting here is not only that the Lord himself provides the means for his wrath to be averted¹⁶³ but the manner which he prescribes. The Lord said to Moses, "Take all the chiefs of the people and hang them in the sun before the LORD, that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel" (Num 25:4). Thus, it is by hanging up the covenant violators and exposing them to the Lord's wrath that divine judgment is averted by Israel. Their hanging functions as a propitiatory sacrifice so the divine wrath is appeased. Caneday, thus, concludes,

Accordingly, the suspension of the criminal in Deut 21:22-23 is associated with the propitiation of Yahweh's wrath. There is no need to search for a text tradition that interprets Deut 21:22-23 as speaking of crucifixion, for the association which Paul expresses in Gal 3:13 is not "hanging upon a tree"/"crucifixion" but "hanging upon a tree"/"vicariously bearing a curse." With this covenant

¹⁶¹Ardel Caneday, "Redeemed from the Curse of the Law': The Use of Deut 21:22-23 in Gal 3:13," *TrinJ* 10, no. 2 (1989): 200-05.

¹⁶²Though I will only deal with the example from Num 25:1-4, Caneday also points to 2 Sam 21:6, 13. *Ibid.*

¹⁶³This is precisely what proponents of penal substitution claim happened in the cross. That is, the cross is not a picture of humanity's attempt to pacify the Lord's anger nor of the Son attempting to appease the wrath of the Father. Rather, it is God the Father who initiates the work of the cross, sending his willing Son to bear the condemnation for his people. So Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 67; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 151; J. I. Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve? The Logic of Penal Substitution," *TynBul* 25 (1973): 39-41; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 141-42; Carson, "Atonement in Romans 3:21-26," 131.

significance, Deut 21:22-23 provides a sufficient OT warrant for its use in application to Christ who was hung “upon the tree” as the bearer of the curse.¹⁶⁴

Paul’s readers, therefore, should not only understand Christ as the one bearing the curse for those who violated the Lord’s demands but more specifically as satisfying the Lord’s wrath so that it may be averted from his people. To say that Christ became “a curse for us” is Paul’s manner of saying that the divine punishment for sinners has been borne by Christ so that they may no longer be the objects of divine judgment.¹⁶⁵ That is, Galatians 3:13 teaches penal substitutionary atonement.

The scope of Christ’s work. As expected, this interpretation of Galatians 3:13 has been the object of attack. Travis and Green rely heavily on Dunn’s interpretation of these verses¹⁶⁶ with the effect that they reduce the scope of Christ’s work in 3:13. Thus, while Travis goes so far as to acknowledge “an element of penalty or retribution in Paul’s understanding of ‘curse’ in this passage,”¹⁶⁷ he downplays the significance this has for a general atonement theory by limiting this particular articulation of Christ’s work to those “Jewish Christians who require Gentile converts to submit to circumcision and food laws.”¹⁶⁸ One may summarize this argument as follows: (1) those

¹⁶⁴Caneday, “Redeemed from the Curse of the Law,” 201-02.

¹⁶⁵So, for example, Peterson, “Atonement in the New Testament,” 45-47; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 148; Gaffin, “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus,” 158-59; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 88-90; Moo, *Romans*, 481; Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 56-59; Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective*, 142; George, *Galatians*, 237-43.

¹⁶⁶Green does not cite Dunn, but his reliance on Dunn for understanding Gal 3:10-14 is obvious (see, Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 60-61). Travis *does* specifically show his reliance on Dunn (see Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 183 n. 10).

¹⁶⁷Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 186.

¹⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 183.

cursed in 3:10 are the same group for whom Christ becomes a curse in 3:13, (2) those cursed in 3:10 are strictly Jewish Christians, (3) the atoning work in 3:13, then, is strictly that which was accomplished for Jewish Christians, and, therefore, (4) the reader is unable to interpret 3:13 as a general statement about atonement without generalizing in a way that the text does not.¹⁶⁹

In order to address the flaws in this argument, it is first helpful to outline Dunn's interpretation of these verses on which both Travis and Green rely. Dunn begins his argument by identifying the "works of the law" as "those obligations prescribed by the law which show the individual concerned to belong to the law, which mark out the practitioner as a member of the people of the law, the covenant people, the Jewish nation."¹⁷⁰ Examples of such obligations would include food laws, circumcision, and the like, which strictly showed one to be a Jew. Moreover, those who "rely on the works of the law" (3:10), are those who elevate these exclusionary laws ("matters of at best secondary importance"¹⁷¹) to a place of primacy so as to exclude the Gentiles from the promise and blessing of Abraham.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹Travis writes, "So we must not read verse 13 as a general statement about atonement. If it is to shed light on our understanding of the significance of Christ's death for all humanity this must be by extrapolation from Paul's argument which here relates specifically to Israel's sin. . . . Galatians 3:13 needs to be analysed in its context rather than treated as a straightforward statement of universal truth." *Ibid.*, 184, 186.

¹⁷⁰James D. G. Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 126.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁷²Dunn writes that all who rely on the works of the law are "all who restrict the grace and promise of God in nationalistic terms, who treat the law as a boundary to mark the people of God off from the Gentiles, who give a false priority to ritual markers, . . . [those who have an] attitude which confines the covenant promise to Jews as Jews . . . in such a way as to exclude the Gentile as Gentile from the promise." *Ibid.*, 137.

According to this argument, Paul's claim in verse 10 would have had a weighty impact on the Jews. There would be no need for Paul to note that the pagan Gentiles were the objects of the divine curse, for this was the common understanding for the Jews of Paul's day. However, by saying in verse 10 that "all who are of the works of the law" are under that same curse, Paul was making the startling claim that "those who use the law to drive a wedge between Jews and Gentiles have abused the law and, therefore, fall under the same curse."¹⁷³ Thus, strictly speaking "the curse of the law" was that which "fell primarily on the Jew," but which also affected the Gentiles "so long as that misunderstanding of the covenant and the law remained dominant."¹⁷⁴

What, then, does Christ accomplish in the atonement? Dunn's answer to this question is varied and complex in one sense and overly simplistic in another. At one point he suggests that Jesus' death serves to remove the curse which had prevented the blessing from reaching the Gentiles, that is, "the curse of a wrong understanding of the law."¹⁷⁵ At another point, Dunn suggests that Jesus death serves to deliver "the heirs of the covenant promise from the ill effects of the too narrow understanding of covenant and law held by most of Paul's Jewish contemporaries."¹⁷⁶ Finally, Dunn adds that by putting Christ outside of the covenant blessing (where the Gentiles were) and then raising him from the dead, God showed that he is "for the Gentiles; and consequently the law could no longer serve as a boundary dividing Jew from Gentile."¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 61.

¹⁷⁴Dunn, *The New Perspective*, 137.

¹⁷⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 138.

In these statements, one can see the varied and complex significance of Jesus' death, according to Dunn. The law pronounced a curse on anyone who did not abide by all things therein. However, according to Dunn, Jesus died to deliver individuals from the curse of *a wrong understanding* of the law. Dunn acknowledges that this would make the Jew the primary target of those being "redeemed . . . from the curse of the law" (Gal 3:13).¹⁷⁸ However, by acknowledging that Jesus died to deliver individuals from the "ill effects of the too narrow understanding" of the law, Dunn shows that the primary object of deliverance from the curse is the Gentiles. After all, they were the ones who suffered from the ill effects of this wrong understanding of the law, since this misunderstanding led to the view that they were excluded from God's covenant people. Finally, by emphasizing the significance of the resurrection, Dunn seems to suggest that the cross functioned only to reveal those whom God was vindicating by raising his Son.¹⁷⁹

These elements are each distinct, suggest different peoples as the main object of the cross, and ultimately fail to address the primary problem Paul deals with in the text. For Dunn, the curse that the law brings on all those who fail to abide by it becomes simply the curse of a wrong understanding of the law. One wonders if Dunn thinks the law would still bring a curse on one who rightly understood that Gentiles were not to be excluded from God's covenant people but failed to abide by all things written in the law.

Dunn's slight move from the curse of the law to the curse of a wrong

¹⁷⁷Ibid., 139 (emphasis original).

¹⁷⁸He writes, ". . . the curse of a wrong understanding of the law. It was a curse which fell primarily on the Jew." Ibid., 137.

¹⁷⁹That is, by dying under the curse of God, Jesus was identifying himself with the Gentiles so that when he was raised, God showed that he is "for the Gentiles." Ibid., 139 (emphasis original).

understanding of the law also paves the way for Christ's death being viewed too simplistically. In Dunn's view, the cross merely corrects everyone's understanding. The Gentiles realize God is for them, the Jews realize they have wrongly excluded the Gentiles, and no one has to suffer from this misunderstanding of the law and its ill effects any longer. It seems little more than a work of hopeful moral influence. Hopefully Jesus' willingness to be identified with the Gentiles and God's vindication of him will show everyone that they need to start thinking a little differently. Wright's commentary on this interpretation is fitting as he labels the steps Dunn takes to reach his conclusion "tortuous and improbable,"¹⁸⁰ adding that "none of the steps in the argument as Dunn reconstructs it corresponds with what Paul actually says."¹⁸¹

By arguing that Christ bore the curse of those Jews who had a wrong understanding of the law and delivered the Gentiles from the ill effects of that misunderstanding, Dunn acknowledges that this "may seem at first a surprisingly narrow understanding of the redemptive effect of Christ's death."¹⁸² Yet, this narrowness is the very element upon which Travis builds his argument to minimize the impact of the penal language of Galatians 3:13. He writes,

The primary focus at this point is not on the situation of humanity in general (for whom "all who rely on the works of the law" is hardly a natural description) but specifically on the Judaizers whose zeal for the law has put them in conflict with God's purpose to bring his promised "blessing of Abraham" to the Gentiles. Thus, when Paul writes in verse 13 that "Christ has redeemed *us* from the curse of the law", "us" is not a straightforward reference to all humanity but more specifically to Jewish people and the ways in which their resistance to God is manifested.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 153.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* n. 51.

¹⁸² Dunn, *The New Perspective on Paul*, 137.

¹⁸³ Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 183.

Therefore, it is now clear why Travis, though he acknowledges an element of retributive and penal language in these verses, cautions against reading this particular articulation of Christ's atoning work as a statement about the nature of the atonement in general.

Yet, there are two pillars upholding Travis' understanding of these verses that will not bear the weight of his argument.¹⁸⁴ The first pillar is the premise that one should read Paul's pronouns in such a way as to hold a sharp distinction between Jews (including himself) and Gentiles. That is, when Paul uses "we," "us," or "our" he means Jewish believers, and when he uses "you" he means Gentile believers. Such an argument is at first appealing, since Jews were specifically given the law and would seem to be those who "are of the works of the law" (3:10) by nature. However, one simply cannot sustain this distinction in Paul's pronoun usage throughout chapters 3-4 (nor in chs. 5-6).

In 3:23-4:11 Paul uses first and second person pronouns in such a way that he cannot intend a sharp distinction. He notes that before faith came "*we* were held captive under the law" and "the law was *our* guardian until Christ came, in order that *we* might be justified by faith" (3:23-24). Now that faith has come, however, he acknowledges that "*we* are no longer under a guardian" (3:25). This image of a guardian serves as a descriptive metaphor for the law, which he illustrates in 4:1-7 as he speaks of sons being treated as slaves under a guardian until the date appointed by their father. However, what is Paul's evidence that *we* are no longer under a guardian? He writes, "For in Christ

¹⁸⁴Though these two pillars will be addressed below, it is perhaps helpful to have them in mind so as to see the whole of Travis' argument. Travis' argument is built upon two premises, namely that Paul's intends strict Jew/Gentile distinction in his use of first and second-person pronouns and that Paul intends to limit "the curse" in 3:10 only to Jews. If these two premises can be supported, then it goes a long way toward suggesting that 3:13, where Paul writes, "Christ redeemed *us* from *the curse of the law*," is limited only to Jewish believers and should not be understood as a general statement of atonement.

Jesus *you* are all sons of God, through faith” (3:26). If Paul were intending a distinction in pronouns, it seems he would have needed to say, “For in Christ Jesus *we* are all sons of God, through faith.” Otherwise, it is difficult to make sense of the logic of Paul’s argument.

Ardel Caneday¹⁸⁵ has suggested an answer that could address this particular problem by arguing that Paul intends a particular order of blessing in Galatians 3-4.¹⁸⁶ That is, God blesses the Jew so that the Gentile might, then, be blessed. He recognizes this order in 3:13-14, where he understands Paul to argue that “redeeming Jewish believers out from under the curse of the law was a *precondition* to bestowing the blessing of Abraham upon the Gentiles.”¹⁸⁷ That is, Christ bears the curse for the Jews (3:13) so that the blessing of Abraham might to come to the Gentiles (3:14). In this manner, the Jew is blessed *so that* the Gentile might be blessed.

If this understanding is brought to Galatians 3:25-26, one could understand Paul’s statement, “*we* are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus *you* are all sons of God, through faith” in terms of the latter manifesting the former. What is the evidence that Jewish believers are not under a guardian? Gentile believers are sons. If there is an order of blessing (Jew, then Gentile), and if the Gentiles are sons, then logically it means that the Jew must have been blessed as well.

¹⁸⁵Unlike Travis, Caneday holds to penal substitutionary atonement in general and yet restricts the language of Gal 3:13 to Jews, stressing that Paul uses his pronouns to show distinction in Gal 3-4. Caneday, “Redeemed from the Curse of the Law,” 203; idem, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 243-344.

¹⁸⁶Caneday does not specifically make the argument that the ordering accounts for pronoun distinction problems in 3:10-4:7, but he does argue for the specific order of blessing and for a sharp distinction in Paul’s pronoun use. Therefore, I have simply taken Caneday’s premises and constructed an argument that could account for problem areas for the distinct-pronoun-usage-argument in 3:10-4:7. Neither Caneday nor Travis provides specific argument for the problem text currently addressed.

But such an understanding strains the text, especially when one considers that Paul does not seem to stress the order of blessing as a priority in Galatians.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, one would have to read Galatians 4:4-6 in the same way, where Paul writes, “God sent forth his Son . . . to redeem those who were under the law, so that *we* might receive adoption as sons. And because *you* are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into *our* hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” If Paul intends a distinction in pronouns here, he should not be surprised if his readers struggle to figure out the logic of his argument!¹⁸⁹

Perhaps one might say that Paul is suggesting that because he knows the Gentiles are sons (and [supplying the unstated premise] Jewish blessings precede Gentile blessings) then their sonship reveals that God must have already sent the Spirit into the hearts of Jewish believers. However, this is not only an extremely complex reading of these verses but defies the natural flow of the verses. If one comes to the text assuming Paul’s deliberate distinction in pronouns, these verses would naturally be read as suggesting a reversal in the previously established order of blessing.¹⁹⁰ Paul would be saying, “God sent his son so that we Jews might receive sonship [a status long claimed by Israel!]. And because you Gentiles are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his son into the hearts of us Christian Jews . . . so that you (Gentile) are no longer a slave but a son.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷Caneday, ““Redeemed from the Curse of the Law,” 204 (emphasis original).

¹⁸⁸In fact, to stress the priority of blessing to the Jew would seem most out of step with Paul’s argument in Galatians wherein he mitigates such distinctions in regard to salvific blessing (e.g., 3:26-29).

¹⁸⁹Better, I would suggest, that Paul does not intend a sharp distinction in pronouns and would find it surprising that his readers are attempting to hold to a distinction when such a commitment strains the logic of his argument repeatedly.

¹⁹⁰That is, the previously established order (according to Caneday) that the Jew is blessed as a precondition to the Gentile being blessed. Caneday, “Redeemed from the Curse of the Law,” 204.

¹⁹¹Sam K. Williams, *Galatians*, ANTC (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997), 11 (brackets original).

Such a reading would turn the order of blessing completely on its head. “Ironically, the Jews receive a sonship (v. 5) that the Gentiles *already* possessed (v. 6). Far from being in a position of priority, if a distinction of pronouns is to be maintained, the Jews are actually at a disadvantage.”¹⁹² It is better, as Das suggests, to read the “first-person pronouns as referring to all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, and the second-person pronouns as similarly inclusive but perhaps rhetorically pointed toward the Gentile recipients,”¹⁹³ since it was the Gentiles who were being told they had to do more than believe in Christ in order to be justified.

The second pillar of Travis’s argument comes in his limitation of those bearing the curse in 3:10 to Jews. After noting his understanding of verse 10 as a reference to Judaizers, he writes, “Thus, when Paul writes in verse 13 that ‘Christ has redeemed *us* from the curse of the law’, ‘us’ is not a straightforward reference to all humanity but more specifically to Jewish people.”¹⁹⁴

Is it possible, however, that Paul was suggesting in 3:10 that even the Gentiles bore responsibility to obey God’s law and were cursed because of their failure to do so? Indeed it is. First, it has already been shown that one should not allow the first person pronoun in 3:13 (“Christ redeemed *us*”) to influence one’s reading of verse 10 because

¹⁹²Das, *Paul and the Jews*, 125 (emphasis original). One other text that seems to suggest Paul does not hold a strong distinction in his use of pronouns is 4:26 and 28. V. 27 contains a proof-text from Isa 54:1, but if it is removed, the text reads, “But the Jerusalem above is free, and she is *our* mother. . . . Now *you*, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.” It is hard to imagine that Paul would mean to stress that the Jerusalem above is the mother of Jewish believers (as opposed to Gentile believers) while noting that Gentile believers “like Isaac” are children of promise.

¹⁹³Ibid.

¹⁹⁴Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 183 (emphasis original). Caneday also limits the reference in 3:10 to Jews. Caneday, “Deut 21:22-23 in Gal 3:13,” 193-95.

Paul does not intend a strong distinction in his use of pronouns. Second, Paul's quotation of Deuteronomy 27:26 claims that cursed is "everyone" (πᾶς ἄνθρωπος, LXX) who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law. Thus, even though Paul acknowledges that the Gentiles did not have the law (Rom 2:14), he still holds them accountable to obey its demands, declaring that "all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law" (Rom 2:12). He then follows by noting that it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous "but the doers of the law who will be justified" (Rom 2:13). After such a statement, one would anticipate Paul answering the question, "But how can the Gentiles be held responsible to obey God's law when they did not have it?" and this is precisely what Paul does. He writes, "For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness . . ." (Rom 2:14). Thus, the Gentiles, like the Jews, were cursed as God's lawful demands bore upon them and they failed to obey. Therefore, though the Jews alone were under the Mosaic administration in redemptive history, both Jews and Gentiles bore the curse that was expressed in the Mosaic law, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the law and do them."

This conclusion finds further support in Paul's reference to the "στοιχεῖα" in Galatians 4:4 and 9. Caneday acknowledges that anyone, regardless of ethnicity, can now become part of that group who are ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (3:10).¹⁹⁵ It stands to reason,

¹⁹⁵He writes, "His polemical argument seems to give it a 'hypothetical projection' that widens its boundary to include 'would-be' Gentile proselytes also. . . . Thus, in this context ὅσοι γὰρ ἐξ ἔργων νόμου εἰσὶν seems to infer the idea of the potentiality, similar to οἱ ὑπὸ νόμον θέλοντες εἶναι ('those who want to be under the law,' 4:21). . . . Neither group [i.e., those of faith or those of the works of the law] is restricted ethnically, for each theoretically consists of both Jews and Gentiles, whose spiritual descent is

then, that if the Gentiles chose to be of that group which are “of the works of the law” they would fall under the curse of the law, since all who are of the works of the law *are* under a curse (ὑπὸ κατάραν εἶσιν, 3:10).¹⁹⁶ Caneday argues that historically Gentiles never fell under that curse which is mentioned in 3:10, for “when Paul speaks of the curse of the law he has in view a specific historical curse”¹⁹⁷ which was only experienced by the Jews. The point should be granted that in redemptive history, the Gentiles never lived under the Mosaic administration. However, this does not mean that they did not bear the curse pronounced in the Mosaic law for their failure to obey the Lord’s demands. In fact, Paul confirms that they did bear this curse by paralleling the Jews’ enslavement with that of the Gentiles.

Paul describes his position under the law in terms of being enslaved to “the elementary principles of the world” (τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου, 4:3). He notes that *we* (ἡμεῖς) were enslaved to these elementary principles. Therefore, one would have to assume that Caneday interprets this as an enslavement that strictly belonged to the Jews and should consequently be seen as synonymous with being under the law, since this is the category that historically belonged to the Jews only. The problem with this is that Paul uses this same description of the enslavement that the Galatians experienced before faith and would experience again if they chose to put themselves in the category of being

traced either to the gospel or to the law.” Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 258-59. See also N. H. Young, “Pronominal Shifts in Paul’s Argument to the Galatians,” in *Ancient History in a Modern University*, vol. 2 of *Early Christianity, Late Antiquity and Beyond* ed. T. W. Hillard et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 213.

¹⁹⁶That is, the Gentiles would return to the cursed state in which they previously existed.

¹⁹⁷Caneday, “The Curse of the Law and the Cross,” 260.

ἐξ ἔργων νόμου. He writes, “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods. But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles (στοιχεῖα, as in 4:3) of the world whose slaves you want to be once more (πάλιν)?”

Therefore, if the pronouns are intending distinction, then the Jews (strictly speaking) were enslaved to στοιχεῖα (according to 4:3) when they were under the law. Similarly the Galatians were enslaved to στοιχεῖά (according to 4:9) prior to faith in Christ (otherwise, Paul could not speak of them wanting to be enslaved πάλιν). Yet, Paul warns, if the Gentiles now put themselves under the law (by observing days and months and seasons and years, 4:10), they will indeed be enslaved to στοιχεῖά again. How, then, could Paul claim that both the Jews under the Mosaic covenant and the Gentiles (without the law) were both enslaved to στοιχεῖά? Van Drunen explains,

Paul therefore identifies slavery under the *stoicheia* as something that life under the Mosaic law and life under paganism had in common. That Paul the Pharisee could say such a thing is indeed remarkable. . . . When God put Israel under the Mosaic law, he . . . [placed] them under the dominion of the works principle insofar as the law expressed and applied the law of nature. And since even pagans under their own false systems of religion abide by necessity under the unyielding demands of the natural law (which their religions corrupt but cannot entirely suppress), here indeed is a point of commonality between Israel and the nations. Old Testament Israelites and pagans lived under the same *stoicheia* of the world, the same elementary principles or basic teachings, because both lived with the constant reminder of the works principles ringing in their hearts through the natural law and (in the case of Israel) in their ears through the Mosaic law’s expression and application of the natural law.¹⁹⁸

That is, both Jews and Gentiles bore the curse that was evident through the Mosaic law

¹⁹⁸VanDrunen, “Natural Law and the Works Principle under Adam and Moses,” 311-12.

because (though the Gentiles did not have the law) both were under the obligations to obey God's commands perfectly. Whether the expression of the curse came through the law written on the Gentiles' hearts or the Mosaic law itself, both Jews and Gentiles were under the same obligation to obey the Lord perfectly, bore the curse for their failure to do so, and thus needed Christ to bear the curse for them. Thus, Paul's warning to the Galatian Gentiles against desiring "to be under the law" (4:21) is a warning against returning to the state of cursing they knew before faith in Christ.

Conclusion. It is best, then, to understand the curse of the law in 3:10 as that condemnation bearing down on Jews *and* Gentiles prior to their faith in Christ because of their failure to obey God's commands. Consequently, Paul's declaration that Christ "redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (3:14) should not be restricted to Jewish believers only but should be understood as an explanation of the significance of Christ's atoning work for all who are condemned before God because of their failure to do all that his law commands. Therefore, if the penal language acknowledged by Travis in verse 13 should not be restricted to the Jews and may be read as a general description of Christ's atoning work, then Galatians 3:13 serves as another text which teaches penal substitution.

Conclusion: The Necessity of Penal Substitution

Green and Baker are right to ask "whether . . . penal substitutionary atonement is faithful to the teaching of Scripture,"¹⁹⁹ for the aim of evangelical scholars must not be found in forming coherent yet unbiblical systems. However, the examination of these

¹⁹⁹Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 27.

four texts has demonstrated that the Bible does indeed teach penal substitutionary atonement. Furthermore, these texts have revealed that the atoning work of Christ addresses the fundamental plight of the created order, namely, the condemnation of individuals. By bearing the condemnation that stood against sinners, Christ has satisfied God's justice so that he might be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in his Son.

Green has challenged penal substitution in asking how it is that "The prevailing model of the atonement, focused as it is on the individual, on a forensic judgment, and on the moment of justification" can serve the purpose of God in restoring all things.²⁰⁰ The examination of these texts has revealed, however, that the atoning work of Christ focuses on the precise area with which Green has a problem—the justification of individuals. Whether Christ is a propitiation so that God might justify the one who has faith in Jesus (Rom 3:25-26), condemned in his flesh so that those in him might no longer bear condemnation (Rom 8:3), made sin for his people so that God might not count their trespasses against them (2 Cor 5:18-21), or cursed for his people so that they might be justified by faith (Gal 3:13); each of these texts focuses on the removal of legal condemnation so that those who have faith in Christ might be justified. That is, this chapter has served to reveal the biblical support for penal substitution as well as the sufficiency of penal substitution in addressing the problem with the created order.

Far from obscuring the cosmological dimensions of salvation,²⁰¹ penal substitution is the remedy to creation's plight. Since the created order is in bondage to

²⁰⁰Green, "Must We Imagine?," 166.

²⁰¹Ibid.

the reign of death which is itself a manifestation of the humanity's condemnation, God must remove the verdict of condemnation from his people if he is to restore the cosmos. However, since removing condemnation would amount to acquitting the guilty (that which God has said he will not do), it is necessary that God uphold his righteousness by punishing guilty sinners in the sacrifice of his Son so that he might justify his people. This is precisely what penal substitution claims and (as this chapter has shown) is the teaching of the Bible itself.

CHAPTER 5

RAISED FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION: THE CROSS, RESURRECTION, AND NEW CREATION

Introduction

Though this study has shown the necessity of penal substitutionary atonement in addressing creation's plight (the legal condemnation of individuals) and that the Bible itself teaches this understanding of the atonement, there are still a few problems to be addressed. First, it has not yet been demonstrated how penal substitution relates to Christ's resurrection. As noted in the opening chapter, proponents of penal substitution have been charged with understanding the atonement in such a way that the resurrection of Christ is (at best) disconnected from the cross or (at worst) altogether unnecessary.¹

Tom Smail articulates the logic of this charge:

The penal model as such does not quite know what to make of the resurrection. It gives birth to a spirituality that . . . is symbolized . . . by a preaching that is dominated by a one-sided preoccupation with sin and condemnation and the suffering of Christ as the price of our deliverance from it. The resurrection is seen only as the sign of the Father's acceptance of the sacrifice, his affirmation of the sufficiency of what has been done to secure our pardon, and as a rather disconnected promise of life after death. . . . But for the New Testament cross and resurrection belong together as part of the one paschal mystery and are far more closely integrated than this model will allow.²

¹Joel B. Green and Mark D. Baker, *Recovering the Scandal of the Cross: Atonement in New Testament & Contemporary Contexts* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 148; Clark H. Pinnock, "Salvation by Resurrection," *Ex Auditu* 9 (1993): 2; Gregory A. Boyd, "Christus Victor Response," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 99.

²Tom Smail, *Once for All: A Confession of the Cross* (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1998), 96.

This charge that penal substitution leaves no room for the resurrection is a serious one. Concerning the task of this present study, this challenge must be addressed because the resurrection of Christ is the inauguration of the new creation.³ He is the first to be sown in weakness and raised in power, the first to be sown in dishonor and raised in glory (1 Cor 15:43). Aside from the focus of this study, however, this charge against penal substitution cannot be overstated because the resurrection is a necessary component of the gospel message. Any articulation of Christ's atoning work that mitigates or removes the necessity of the resurrection must be dismissed because Christ's death *and* resurrection are necessary for salvation. Paul declares to the Corinthians that the gospel

³That is, since I am attempting in this study to demonstrate how penal substitution brings about new creation, if I cannot show how penal substitution relates to Christ's resurrection (the inauguration of new creation) then I can in no way claim to have succeeded in demonstrating my thesis.

Another reason this challenge needs addressed is because the resurrection has often been a neglected topic within Reformed writings concerning redemption (especially in relation to the atonement). Richard Gaffin noted thirty years ago, "Interest in the resurrection for the most part has been restricted to its apologetic value and as a stimulus to faith. When it has received limited dogmatic attention . . . it has been viewed as sealing the effectiveness and facilitating the applicability of the redemption wrought by Christ's death" (Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978; reprint, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1987], 11-12). Gaffin then went on to illustrate this statement by pointing to some standard works in Reformed dogmatics, including Shedd, Warfield, and Murray (*ibid.*, 12 n. 2). He noted that Shedd's *Dogmatic Theology* "passes directly from a discussion of 'Vicarious Atonement' . . . to 'Regeneration,'" thus ignoring the resurrection altogether (see William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, 3rd ed., ed. Alan W. Gomes [Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003], 7, 690-786). Then, concerning Warfield, Gaffin added, "The major writings of B. B. Warfield in this area [i.e., the accomplishment of redemption] concentrate exclusively upon the death of Christ understood as atonement." (See Benjamin Breckenridge Warfield, *Biblical Doctrines* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1929], 327-435). Finally, concerning Murray, Gaffin wrote, "This virtual equation of the accomplishment of redemption with atonement which characterizes traditional Reformed dogmatics is nowhere made more clear or expressed more programmatically than in the opening sentence of John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*: 'The accomplishment of redemption is concerned with what has been generally called the atonement.'" (See John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955], 9).

However, in the thirty years since Gaffin's statement, the trend of treating redemption while giving little attention to the resurrection has, at times, continued. For example, Millard Erickson devotes only a page and a half (spread over three pages) to the resurrection in his *Christian Theology* before giving sixty-one pages to the atonement (see Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998], 794-858), and Bruce Demarest, in his work on salvation, barely mentions the resurrection in his section titled "Part Two: The Provision of Salvation" (see Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997], 147-99).

includes both the fact that Christ “died for our sins” and that “he was raised on the third day” (1 Cor 15:3-4). Then, later in that same chapter, he adds, “If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor 15:17). Therefore, if penal substitution makes the resurrection unnecessary, it must be considered unbiblical⁴ and rejected.⁵

The other two problems that need to be addressed come back to Green’s initial charge that penal substitution focuses on the forensic judgment of individuals which obscures God’s purpose of restoring the created order.⁶ Therefore, while it has been shown that penal substitution sufficiently addresses the just removal of condemnation from individuals so that they might be justified by God, it still has not been demonstrated how the legal reality of justification relates to the transformation of individuals at the resurrection. Furthermore, even if it is argued that the forensic judgment of believers

⁴Green and Baker (*Recovering the Scandal*, 148) stand heavily on their understanding that penal substitution makes the resurrection unnecessary, claiming that this makes penal substitution “unbiblical.” They write, “We could also mention that because of the singular focus on penal satisfaction, Jesus’ resurrection is not really necessary according to this model. Penal substitution, however, is unbiblical not just because it distorts or leaves out biblical concepts . . .”

⁵The weight of this is only heightened by my understanding that penal substitution expounds the foundational significance of Christ’s atoning work. And I am not alone in this understanding. See also John R. W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1986), 133-63; David Peterson, ed. *Where Wrath and Mercy Meet: Proclaiming the Atonement Today* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001), xiv; Steve Jeffery, Mike Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity, 2007), 21; Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 171-75; J. I. Packer, “What Did the Cross Achieve: The Logic of Penal Substitution,” *TynBul* 25 (1973): 3; Robert Letham, *The Work of Christ*, CCT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 132-39; Thomas R. Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 67.

⁶ Joel B. Green, “Must We Imagine the Atonement in Penal Substitutionary Terms? Questions, Caveats, and a Plea,” in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 166.

entails their resurrection, the connection between the resurrection of individuals and the restoration of the created order still needs to be established.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to answer each of these problems and show the implications for the redemption of the created order. Specifically this chapter will argue that the resurrection of Christ is not only connected to penal substitution but is the necessary consequence of penal substitution if the work of Christ is to serve as the basis for man's justification before God. Second, this chapter will demonstrate that because salvation comes to believers through their union with Christ—whose resurrection was a “judicial declaration” and an “eschatological demonstration”⁷ of his justification—so the justification of believers necessarily includes both a judicial declaration of their righteous standing in this life and a public demonstration of that justifying verdict in their resurrection. Finally, this chapter will show that the resurrection of believers signals a restoration to the full privileges of sonship and, consequently, brings about the restoration of the created order.

These aims will be achieved through multiple layers of argument. The first section of this chapter will examine the importance and nature of union with Christ in relation to salvation. This section will also examine the nature of Christ's work, focusing on Christ's obedient life and penalty-bearing death. The second section of the chapter will focus on the nature of Christ's resurrection, noting the legal, declarative, and transformative nature of that event. This section will reveal why the resurrection is a necessary consequence of penal substitutionary atonement if believers are to be justified

⁷These terms have been taken from Lane G. Tipton, “Union with Christ and Justification,” in *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott Oliphant (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2007), 30.

via their union with Christ. The third section will, then, examine the nature of believers' justification and its entailments in light of Romans 5:12-21 and the declarative and transformative nature of Christ's own resurrection. Finally, the developments of these first three sections will be brought together in a fourth section which will demonstrate the connection between the justification of individuals, the restoration of the full privileges of sonship, and the restoration of the created order.

Union with Christ

In order to understand the connection between penal substitution and Christ's resurrection, one must consider the representative nature of Jesus' work. Some have attempted to place the concepts of representation and substitution in separate and exclusive categories,⁸ but Scripture allows no such division. Believers are said to have "died with Christ" (Rom 6:8) *and* are told that "Christ died for us" (Rom 5:8).⁹ Thus, Christ represents believers in his high-priestly work (Heb 5:1), yet because he is their substitute, they do not have to bear the wrath of God in their own persons.¹⁰ When

⁸See, for example, Morna D. Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 26-41; idem, "Interchange in Christ," *JTS* 22 (1971): 358; Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 61; Hans Boersma, *Violence, Hospitality, and the Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 177. Green and Baker are not of this group, but see representation and substitution assisting one another (see Green and Baker, *Recovering the Scandal*, 64-65). Cf. Stephen H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 187.

⁹Green and Baker (*Recovering the Scandal*, 60, 64-65) rightly note this reality. They identify the "for us" language of Gal 3:13 as indicative of "substitution" and then add, "As significant as the theme of participation in Christ's death (and resurrection) is for Paul (cf., e.g., Phil 3:10), the possibility of such participation is grounded in his first dying 'for us.'" Similarly, Travis (*Christ and the Judgement of God*, 187) recognizes "for us" (or "for them") language as substitutionary. Commenting on 2 Cor 5, he writes, "Christ as our representative and substitute took our sins upon himself so that they no longer stand against us and we are set free to live a new life in him. The motifs of 'substitute' and 'representative' are merged together in verse 14: 'He died for all, so that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them' (cf. 2 Cor. 5:14, 21 with Rom. 4:25)."

explaining Christ's atoning work, then, "we must account for both the exclusive or strictly substitutionary and the inclusive or representative aspects, both the 'for us' and the 'in him' and 'with him' of Christ's death."¹¹ One must see Jesus as a "representative substitute"¹² for believers and his atoning work as that of "inclusive substitution."¹³ The combination of these two elements is crucial because unless the representative element of Christ's work is acknowledged alongside that of substitution, the resurrection will seem to have little connection to a forensic atonement. The reason for this is because what Christ accomplishes in both his death and resurrection is appropriated to believers via their union with him.

Union with Christ has been noted as the "central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation,"¹⁴ and this is for good reason. Salvation is pictured throughout Scripture in

¹⁰Rightly, Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 244. Denney argued that those opposing representation with substitution claim "less that Christ died for the ungodly, than that the ungodly in Christ died for themselves," which he labeled a "profound misapprehension of the apostle" (i.e., in Rom 5:6). James Denney, *The Atonement and the Modern Mind* (Cincinnati: Jennings & Pye, 1903), 134.

¹¹Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus: 'The Scandal of the Cross,'" in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, ed. Charles E. Hill and Frame A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 145.

¹²Packer, "What Did the Cross Achieve?," 21.

¹³Gaffin, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 144-45. Gaffin notes that he borrows the term "inclusive substitution" from Jürgen Becker, though he uses it differently. See Jürgen Becker, *Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles*, trans. O. C. Dean, Jr. (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993), 409.

¹⁴John Murray writes, "Union with Christ is really the central truth of the whole doctrine of salvation not only in its application but also in its once-for-all accomplishment in the finished work of Christ. Indeed the whole process of salvation has its origin in one phase of union with Christ and salvation has in view the realization of the other phases of union with Christ." John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 161 (see also 165). For similar statements, see Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., "Union with Christ: Some Biblical and Theological Reflections," in *Always Reforming: Explorations in Systematic Theology*, ed. A. T. B. McGowan (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 72; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 75; James S. Stewart, *A Man in Christ: The Vital Elements of St. Paul's Religion* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1935), 147; Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, CCT (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 100, 107; A. T. B. McGowan, "Justification and the *ordo*

terms of those blessings which believers experiences via their union with Christ. Thus, when Paul writes of believers experiencing no condemnation before God, it is a reality “for those who are *in Christ*” (Rom 8:1). Nor is this pattern of salvation coming through union with Christ rare in Paul’s letters. Bruce Demarest has noted that expressions such as ἐν χριστῷ, ἐν κυρίῳ, ἐν χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, and ἐν αὐτῷ occur 216 times in Paul’s letters, in addition to the twenty-six times in John’s writings.¹⁵ It is no exaggeration to say that without union with Christ, there is no salvation. But what is the nature of union with Christ? In order to answer this question, one must consider the relationship Scripture portrays between Adam and Christ.

Adam, Christ, and Representative Union

The identification most important for understanding the nature of union with Christ is that of Jesus as the second/last Adam. Paul links Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, 45, and 47. In Romans 5:14, Adam is referred to as a “type”¹⁶ of Christ, minimally indicating that there is similarity between these two

salutis,” in *Justification in Perspective: Historical Developments and Contemporary Challenges*, ed. Bruce L. McCormack (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 163.

¹⁵Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 315.

¹⁶For a thorough study and explanation of the nature of typology in Scripture, see Richard M. Davidson, *Typology in Scripture: A Study of Hermeneutical Τύπος Structures*, vol. 2 of *Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1981). He defines typology, writing, “Typology as a hermeneutical endeavor on the part of the biblical writers may be viewed as the study of certain OT salvation-historical realities (persons, events, or institutions) which God has specifically designed to correspond to, and be prospective/predictive prefigurations of, their ineluctable . . . and absolutely escalated eschatological fulfillment aspects . . . in NT salvation history.” *Ibid.*, 405-06. For further discussion on the nature of typology, see Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982; reprint Wipf and Stock, 2002); John David Dawson, *Christian Figural Reading and the Fashioning of Identity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics: Foundations and Principles of Evangelical Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 234-57.

individuals. In addition, in 1 Corinthians 15:22, Paul parallels the notions of individuals being “in Adam” and “in Christ.” Thus, Ferguson rightly declares that the “strongest clue” to understanding the notion of union with Christ lies in the parallel phrase “in Adam.”¹⁷ That is, understanding the way in which Adam relates to mankind or the manner in which man is “in Adam” should be indicative of the manner in which men are in union with Christ or “in Christ.” What then is the relationship between Adam and mankind?

The answer according to Romans 5:12-21 is that Adam is in a “representative union” with mankind, so that what Adam did affected all those “in him.”¹⁸ That is, as Adam lived in the garden, he did not live his life as a “private person”¹⁹ but represented mankind before God. This is clear in Romans 5:12-21 as Paul consistently shows Adam’s one action affecting all those “in him.” Therefore, as Paul notes Adam’s disobedience in the garden, he logically moves from the condemnation Adam brought on himself to the condemnation of all men for whom he was a representative (Rom 5:16, 18). As noted in chapter two of this study, what Adam does (disobeys) and receives²⁰ (a

¹⁷Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 108; see also Gaffin, “Union with Christ,” 272.

¹⁸John Murray, *The Imputation of Adam’s Sin* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959; reprint, Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1977), 41. For further claims that Adam is in representative union with mankind, see also Gaffin, “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus,” 144; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 75-78; Herman Kuiper, *By Grace Alone: A Study in Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955), 41; Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 108; A. A. Hodge, *Outline of Theology* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1868), 369. See also the discussion on Rom 5:12 from chap. 2 of this study.

One could also consider that Adam’s relationship to mankind was a natural one in the sense that men were simply biologically in Adam and actually participated biologically in his action. This is an understanding that can rightly accompany an understanding of Adam’s headship as representative. However, Murray rightly notes that “if *all* that we posit in the case of Adam is *simply* his natural headship or parenthood, we do not have the kind of relationship that would provide the pattern for the headship of Christ,” a parallel clearly indicated in Rom 5 and 1 Cor 15. Murray, *Imputation*, 39-40 (emphasis added).

¹⁹Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 75.

verdict of condemnation) is determinative for those whom he legally represents.²¹

It is not surprising, then, that Paul speaks of Christ's work as determinative for those whom he legally represents. Paralleling the theme regarding Adam's representative action, he notes that Christ's "one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men" and that by his "obedience the many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:18-19). Where Adam is called the "first" man/Adam, Christ is called the "second" and "last" man/Adam (1 Cor 15:45-47). This implies that Adam and Jesus are unique; none other affects the world as these two. Gaffin's comments here deserve to be quoted at length:

Adam and Christ are identified as representatives or key figures in solidarity with others. The order of Paul's outlook here is such that Adam is "the first" . . . there is no one *before* him. Christ is "the last" . . . there is no one *after* him. . . . But Christ is not only "the last," he is also, as such, "the second" . . . there is no one *between* Adam and him. In other words, and this is particularly important for us here, the sweep of Paul's covenant-historical outlook, the overarching hierarchy of his concerns here, is such that no one comes into consideration but Adam and Christ—not David, not Moses and the law given at Sinai, not even Abraham as the promise-holder, not Noah, nor anyone else. . . . As Paul is looking at things in this passage, no one between them "counts."²²

Therefore, just as the first Adam lives with his actions and the result of those actions as determinative for those whom he represents, so Christ lives with his actions and the result of those actions as determinative for those whom he represents. What then

²⁰It is common to find claims that what Adam *does* is determinative for those "in him." However, the language that what Adam "receives" is also determinative for those "in him" is not as common. Yet this notion must be upheld in the parallel "in Christ" if one is to understand fully the legal declaration and transformative result of justification through union with the resurrected Christ.

²¹For further discussion on the manner in which Adam relates to mankind, see John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 178-210; idem, *Imputation*, 22-41; Schreiner, *Romans*, 270-97; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 314-50; Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle*, NSBT, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 63-81.

²²Gaffin, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 159. Similarly, Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 538; Murray, *Imputation*, 39.

does Christ do so that those united to him are affected? Answering this question, too, causes one to reflect on the work of Adam.

The Nature of Christ's Work

When one considers Christ's work against the backdrop of Adam's, it is clear that the crucial issues to be addressed (and overturned) are disobedience/sin, condemnation, and death. What Paul highlights concerning the work of Adam in Romans 5:12-21 is Adam's disobedience, the condemnation that follows, and the manifestation of that condemnation in a reign of death. The fact that Adam's "one trespass led to condemnation for all men" (Rom 5:18) indicates the demand for absolute obedience as one sin is sufficient to bring about condemnation on Adam and all those whom he represents before God.²³ Recognizing this demand for obedience, Adam's sin highlights the need for one to obey where he failed and to remove the condemnation that he brought upon mankind if individuals are to be justified and live.²⁴

This is precisely the nature in which the Bible presents Christ's work. As man's representative, Christ must obey perfectly as well as bear condemnation on man's

²³Cranfield writes, "That one single misdeed should be answered by judgment, this is perfectly understandable: that the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift, this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension." C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, vol. 1, ICC (Edinburgh, Scotland: T. & T. Clark, 1975), 286. For further argument that God demands perfect obedience, see Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," 91-92; F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Galatians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 164-66; Gaffin, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 159; Herman Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, vol. 3 of *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 400.

²⁴That Christ needed to obey where Adam failed, see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 172; Jeffery, Ovey, Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 134-35; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 75. N. T. Wright describes this reality well: "The failure of humankind ('Adam') to be the creator's wise, image-bearing steward over creation has not led the creator to rewrite the vocation, but rather to send the Messiah as the true human being. The purpose is that . . . he can be and do, for humankind and all creation, what neither humankind nor creation could do for themselves." N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 334.

behalf. Thus, both Christ's "active" and "passive obedience"²⁵ are necessary for overturning the effect of Adam's sin.²⁶

When Jesus comes into the world, he comes as a representative for those "in him" to undo what Adam did as humanity's first representative. It is, therefore, not by accident that the beginning of Jesus' public ministry is a time of temptation.²⁷ Also interesting is the manner in which this temptation appears in Luke's gospel.

Luke writes of Jesus' baptism in 3:21-22, ending with the Father's declaration, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (Luke 3:22). He then instantly moves into the giving of the genealogy of Jesus. However, whereas Matthew's genealogy goes back to Abraham, Luke's concludes with reference to Adam, whom he describes as "the son of God" (Luke 3:38). Then, immediately upon concluding Jesus' genealogy, Luke turns to the account of Jesus being tempted by the devil. Again, interestingly, Satan's first temptation begins, "If you are the Son of God . . ." (Luke 4:3). The connecting point between these three seemingly unrelated events or topics (i.e., baptism, genealogy, and temptation) is the identity of the true son of God, the one who would obey God in the face of temptation. Luke is establishing Jesus as the last Adam,

²⁵For discussion on the use of these phrases, see Murray, *Redemption*, 20-24; Bavinck, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, 393-95; Michael S. Horton, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 223-25; J. V. Fesko, *Justification: Understanding the Classic Reformed Doctrine* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 146-64.

²⁶Fiddes has argued that proponents of penal substitution are "perplexed" and "confused" about the place of Christ's active obedience in salvation, but this claim is unfounded (Paul S. Fiddes, *Past Event and Present Salvation: The Christian Idea of Atonement* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1989]). Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, rightly note that Fiddes demonstrates "grave misunderstandings of the doctrine of penal substitution." Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 212.

²⁷So Letham, *Work of Christ*, 75; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke 1-9*, AB (New York: Doubleday, 1970), 506; Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 363; Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission*, 172-75.

the true Son of God, the one who would obey where Adam failed.²⁸ Therefore, Jesus “relives Adam’s life” and experiences the temptations Adam faced, but “where Adam became a transgressor, Jesus remained righteous.”²⁹

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the Bible also portrays Jesus as bearing the wrath of God in his death. Just as Jesus comes to obey where Adam failed so he comes to bear the condemnation brought about by Adam’s sin. In his death, however, the New Testament continues to emphasize Jesus’ role as representative. The author of Hebrews picks up this imagery most clearly, showing that Jesus is a priest in the line of Melchizedek, so that he might “act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins” (Heb 5:1-9).³⁰ Jesus’ incarnation, then, is crucial so that he might “become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb 2:17).³¹ Thus, Hebrews sees Jesus as a representative for the

²⁸Beale correctly notes, “Instead of beginning with David and Abraham and working down towards the time of Jesus like Matthew, Luke’s genealogy begins with the time of Jesus and works back to Adam, with which it ends: ‘the son of Adam, the son of God’ (Luke 3:38). The purpose is to identify Jesus as the Last Adam . . . as an end-time Adam, the true Son of God, resisting the temptations to which Adam and Eve succumbed.” Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 172.

As noted in chap. 1 of this study, Israel is also referred to as God’s “son” (Exod 4:22-23; Jer 31:9; Hos 11:1; Deut 14:1; 32:5; Isa 43:6). Therefore, Jesus is not only seen as the last Adam but as the true Israel. This is the likely connection Matthew is drawing in the early part of his gospel. So D. A. Carson, *Matthew 1-12*, EBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 111-12; R. T. France, *Jesus and the Old Testament: His Application of Old Testament Passages to Himself and His Mission* (Vancouver, BC: Regent College Press, 1998), 38-171. For other arguments that Jesus is the true “son of God,” the “last Adam,” and the “true Israel,” see N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 18-40; idem, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 248-59, 312-72, 719-736; David E. Holwerda, *Jesus & Israel: One Covenant or Two?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 27-58; Stephen J. Wellum, “Baptism and the Relationship between the Covenants,” in *Believer’s Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Shawn D. Wright (Nashville: B&H, 2006), 134-35; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 134.

²⁹Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 134.

³⁰This statement that the priest acts “on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins” is spoken of a high priest generally in Heb 5, but the author makes clear through the remainder of that chapter that it is in this role that Jesus fulfills his sacrificial ministry. Concerning Jesus’ high priesthood in the order of Melchizedek, see Heb 7:1-25.

people of God so that he might offer a sacrifice to turn away God's wrath from them.³²

One key difference between Jesus and the former high priests, however, is that Jesus is both the priest making the sacrifice on behalf of God's people *and* the substitutionary sacrifice that is offered. Just as the lamb without blemish was slaughtered and its blood shed instead of the firstborn during the Passover, so Jesus offers "himself without blemish to God" (Heb 9:14).³³ He appeared "once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of *himself*" (Heb 9:26).

Therefore, though God's people were the objects of God's wrath because of their sin (Rom 1:18-3:20; Eph 2:1-3), Christ bore God's wrath and condemnation for sinners in his death on the cross. This reality is seen both in Jesus' struggle in the garden

³¹For a more thorough examination of Jesus' need to become human in order to fulfill his priestly role, see Geerhardus Vos, "The Priesthood of Christ in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980), 141-43; George H. Guthrie, *Hebrews*, NIVAp (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 108-111; William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, WBC, vol. 47A (Dallas: Word, 1991), 60-66.

³²Whether or not ἱλάσκεσθαι is understood to include the idea of propitiation in 2:17, one can affirm that the effect of Christ's sacrifice (referenced in 2:17) was to turn away God's wrath from his people. This is evident from the language of Heb 10:26-31, where if one turns from faith in the sacrifice of Christ as sufficient, what awaits him is "a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries . . . punishment . . . [and] vengeance." Rightly, Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Hebrews*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 121-22. That "ἱλάσκεσθαι" in 2:17 includes the notion of "propitiation," see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), 125-60, 202-05; Simon J. Kistemaker, "Atonement in Hebrews," in *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological, and Practical Perspectives*, eds. Charles E. Hill and Frame A. James III (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 163-167; Lane, *Hebrews*, 1:65-66; Roger R. Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," *WTJ* 17 (1954-55): 141; Letham, *The Work of Christ*, 112; Philip E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 120-21; against, C. H. Dodd, "ἸΛΑΣΚΕΣΘΑΙ, Its Cognates, Derivatives, and Synonyms in the Septuagint," *JTS* 32 (1931): 360; Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 96 n. 192. O'Brien notes that the epistle as a whole teaches that atonement is made through God's wrath being averted (thus suggesting propitiation), but he ultimately concludes that it is not clear exactly what is intended in 2:17. He writes, "Here at 2:17, however, Hebrews does not indicate how this forgiveness and removal of wrath take place. The answer is reserved for the later expository chapters." O'Brien, *Hebrews*, 121-22.

³³It is fitting in light of the nature of the Passover sacrifice that John portrays Jesus' death as taking place during Passover week. On this, see D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*. PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 603-05.

and in the nature of his death. Prior to the cross, Jesus prays in the garden, “Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will” (Mark 14:36). In light of the cup symbolizing God’s wrath in Scripture,³⁴ this is the clearest meaning of “cup” in this text.³⁵ Jesus anticipates going to the cross so that he might bear the condemnation of God’s people—the wrath of God. Then, the scene at the cross itself shows that Jesus undergoes condemnation, bearing God’s wrath toward sinners. He is handed over to die, cries out, asking why God has forsaken him, and the earth is shrouded in darkness—all signs that he is bearing God’s wrath.³⁶ Therefore, when Jesus dies on the cross, he dies as the righteous Son of God, bearing the condemnation of the Father for sinners.

Union with Christ and His Work

Union with Christ, then, is the believer’s union with one who has lived a

³⁴See, for example, Ps 11:6; 75:8; Isa 51:17, 22; Jer 25:15; Rev 14:10; 16:19.

³⁵Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 76-77; Peter G. Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance: Atonement in Mark’s Gospel*, NSBT, vol. 18 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004), 66-67; William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 517; Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” 91; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 68-70. Those seeing the cup in the same way, commenting on the parallel reference in Matt 26:39, include Carson, *Matthew 1-12*, 1995, 543-44; R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 1005.

³⁶That these are signs indicating Christ as bearing God’s judgment, see Schreiner, “Penal Substitution View,” 91-92; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 79; Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance*, 52-54, 126-33. Bolt writes, “When God is the one handing people over, the expression has overtones of divine judgment (e.g. Ezek. 39:23), sometimes explicitly paralleled with a reference to the wrath of God (Judg. 2:14; Ps. 78:61, cf. v. 59; . . . Rom. 1:18ff). . . . Interpreted by the biblical story, this darkness also becomes a sign of an event with great cosmic significance. It shows that Jesus is subject of the judgment of God. The Old Testament used darkness as an image for judgment, especially for the day of the Lord, or the day of judgment. . . . Before the final plague, when the angel of death moved throughout the land before that first Passover, when Israel was saved from slavery, darkness fell on the whole land for three days (Exod. 10:21-22). As a sign that the land was under the curse of God, people stumbled around in deep darkness, a darkness that could be felt. . . . Darkness at noon was a particular image used on several significant occasions to underline the severity of the judgment [see Jer. 15:9; Deut. 28:29; Job. 5:14; Is. 59:10]. . . . Jesus was mocked, again a concrete form of experiencing God’s wrath. He had previously spoken of his coming death as a baptism, and as a cup to be drunk; both images refer to God’s wrath. Death itself is the manifestation of God’s wrath, especially death by crucifixion. . . . Jesus is forsaken, because, like the psalmist, his Father leaves him to endure this affliction rather than saving him out of it. He would not be forsaken if God chose to rescue him.” *Ibid.*, 52-54, 126-33.

perfectly obedient life before God and died, bearing the condemnation for man's sin.³⁷

Both of these elements are crucial in explaining the concept of penal substitutionary atonement. Having lived a righteous life as the representative for the people of God, Jesus dies as their substitute, paying the penalty for their sin. Bruce Demarest's definition of penal substitution concurs:

In love Jesus Christ, our substitute, in his *life* perfectly fulfilled the law and in *death* bore the just penalty for our sins. Expressed otherwise, on the cross Christ took our place and bore the equivalent punishment for our sins, thereby satisfying the just demands of the law and appeasing God's wrath.³⁸

This explanation of the nature and effect of Christ's death, however, might also elucidate why some have claimed that those holding to penal substitutionary atonement make the resurrection unnecessary. Thus, Boyd notes, "If the main problem needing to be addressed by Christ was that God's wrath needed to be appeased, and if the main solution to this problem consisted of God slaying his Son on the cross, one naturally wonders what could possibly be left to be done once this is completed."³⁹ If man's problem is that he bears God's condemnation because of his sin and so God's wrath hangs over him, why is any more needed than for Christ to bear the condemnation for man's sin on the cross and, as his substitute, appease God's wrath toward man by paying man's penalty?⁴⁰

³⁷Noting that believers alone are united with Christ is crucial because one is united to Christ only as he or she believes. Therefore, though Adam represents all of mankind, Christ represents only those who have, do, and will believe in him. So Moo, *Romans*, 342-44; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 308; idem, *Romans*, 290-92; Stott, *Romans*, 159; Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard de Witt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 340-41.

³⁸Demarest, *The Cross of Christ*, 158-59 (emphasis original).

³⁹Gregory A. Boyd, "Christus Victor Response," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 99.

Moreover, the apparent sufficiency of Christ's obedient life and penalty-bearing death is seen when one compares the role of Adam and the role of Christ. If one considers that Adam disobeys and brings about condemnation that shows itself in death,⁴¹ then it seems that Christ's work parallels this sufficiently to undo what Adam did and to produce forgiveness of sins and life for those united to him. The logic of this parallelism is displayed in the following illustration comparing the work of Adam and Christ:

Adam → disobeys → is condemned → condemnation evidenced in death

Christ → obeys → bears condemnation → bearing of condemnation evidenced in life

In this sequence it seems logical that Christ's obedient life and penalty-bearing death are sufficient to bring about justification to the believer, a justification which shows itself in life. Each aspect of Adam's work that results in death appears to be matched sufficiently by an aspect of Christ's work that results in life. The problem, however, is that the New Testament simply will not allow this to be seen as a sufficient paradigm. Rather, Paul declares, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished" (1 Cor 15:17-18).⁴² That is to say, there is another necessary element in Christ's work if the

⁴⁰This logic has perhaps led some who would not deny the necessity of the resurrection and gladly affirm penal substitutionary atonement to define the "gospel" without mention of the resurrection. Thus, Jerry Bridges has written in his otherwise excellent work, "The good news of the gospel is that Jesus paid for all our sins on the cross and we are thereby forgiven," Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2006), 25-26.

⁴¹See chap. 2 of this study.

⁴²Concerning 1 Cor 15:17, Gaffin rightly notes, "His point here is surely not that they are in their sins only in some respects, say as sin's corrupting and death-dealing consequences continue, while others, like the guilt incurred, have already been removed by [Christ's] death. Rather, he can only mean 'still in your sins' entirely, unrelievedly." Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *"By Faith, Not by Sight": Paul and the Order of Salvation* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2006), 28-29.

believer is to be justified and have life—the resurrection of Christ. To see precisely why this is the case, one must understand the nature of Christ’s resurrection.

The Resurrection of Christ

The necessity of the resurrection must be seen against the backdrop of the fact that Christ died as the condemned one.⁴³ If Christ’s death is the last “word” on that Friday, then it is a judicial declaration that Jesus is accursed of God. For Jesus to remain dead would be evidence that the one who appeared to be the perfectly obedient Son was something less than perfectly righteous. Moreover, since believers are united with Christ in such a way that what is true of him is true of them, if Christ remains under the condemnation of God then believers are condemned as well.⁴⁴ After his death, then, Jesus must be justified, vindicated as the righteous Son. This is precisely what happens in the resurrection.⁴⁵ As Geerhardus Vos explained, “Christ’s resurrection was the *de facto* declaration of God in regard to his being just. His quickening bears in itself

⁴³That Christ in his death is the condemned one is the logic of Christ dying to bear the penalty for man’s sin.

⁴⁴Gaffin writes, “In other words, as our substitute, a crucified but unresurrected Christ still bears the guilt of our sins; as long as he remains in a state of death, its penal force continues,” “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus,” 160.

⁴⁵That Christ’s resurrection is his vindication/justification, see Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1930, reprint, Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1994), 136-71 (esp. 151-52); Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 18-34 (esp. 28); idem, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 248-50; Don Howell, Jr., “The Center of Pauline Theology,” *BSac* 151 (1994): 63; Bolt, *The Cross from a Distance*, 149-50; Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 77-134; idem, “By Faith, Not by Sight,” 66; idem, “Atonement in the Pauline Corpus,” 160; Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 615; Mark A. Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness: Paul’s Theology of Justification*, NSBT, vol. 9 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000), 46-47; idem, “Righteousness, Justice, and Justification,” in *NDBT*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander, et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2000), 743-44; Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 238; Moo, *Romans*, 290; Larry J. Kreitzer, “Resurrection,” in *DPL*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, et al. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 811; George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992); 184-85.

testimony of his justification.”⁴⁶

A return to the argument of Romans 5:12-21 reinforces this understanding, particularly Paul’s antithetical parallelism between Christ’s work and Adam’s work. As Paul notes that Adam sinned and brought condemnation that resulted in death, so he writes, “One act of righteousness leads to *justification resulting in life* for all men” (Rom 5:18)⁴⁷ The unspoken reality paralleled in the work of Adam and Christ is that each received a legal sentence.⁴⁸ That is, the judgment following Adam’s one trespass brought condemnation to all men (Rom 5:16, 18) precisely because this was the very sentence that was pronounced on Adam who served as a representative for all mankind in union with him. And that legal sentence of condemnation is manifested in the reign of death. In like manner, Christ’s obedience “brought justification” (Rom 5:16) to all in union with him because this was the very sentence pronounced on Christ. And that legal sentence of justification is manifested in life. This parallelism is illustrated in the following revised diagram:

Adam → disobeys/sins → is condemned → condemnation evidenced in death
Christ → obeys → (bears condemnation) → is justified → justification evidenced in life

This diagram better reflects the reality that life is founded upon the legal

⁴⁶Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 151.

⁴⁷As noted in chap. 2 of this study, this translation reflects my understanding of δικαίωσιν ζωῆς. It is a genitive of result, indicating that justification results in life. So Moo, *Romans*, 341 n. 126; Seifrid, *Christ Our Righteousness*, 71; Schreiner, *Romans*, 287; Murray, *Romans*, 202; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:289.

⁴⁸Tipton, “Union with Christ,” 37; Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 29-31; cf. Murray, *Romans*, 202.

sentence of justification received by Christ.⁴⁹ How is it, though, that Christ's resurrection reveals that he has received this sentence of justification? Utilizing Vos's language, how is it that Christ's "quickenings bears in itself the testimony of his justification?"⁵⁰ This lies in the connection between righteousness, justification, and life illustrated above. If one can say that death is a demonstration that one has been condemned, so one may equally say that life is a demonstration that one has been justified. Consequently, when Christ is raised from death *to life*, it is a demonstration that he is justified. The transformation to life is the evidence of a legal sentence of justification. This is what Vos was claiming as he wrote, "Christ's resurrection was the *de facto* declaration of God in regard to his being just. His quickening bears in itself testimony of his justification."⁵¹ If one can only have life as a result of being justified, then the resurrection of Christ to life is proof he has been/is justified.⁵²

⁴⁹Tipton rightly notes the nature of the parallel illustrated in these verses: "Condemnation, which is forensic and declarative, is the result of the one man's trespass. Justification, which is likewise forensic and declarative, is the result of the one act of righteousness. Antithetical parallels are drawn between sin and righteousness, on the one hand, and condemnation and justification, on the other hand." Tipton, "Union with Christ and Justification," 36. Similarly, Hooker writes, "Since the condemnation of the many results from the condemnation of Adam, the logic of the argument suggests that the acquittal of the many depends on the acquittal of Christ. This acquittal, which leads to life for the many, would have taken place at the resurrection, an act of vindication which established his righteousness. Just as men share Adam's condemnation and death, so now they share Christ's vindication and life. . . . Christ's death and resurrection lead to 'justification' for many precisely because he himself is 'justified' by God and acknowledged as righteous. The disobedience of Adam led to condemnation for him and for all men . . . because they are 'in Adam'; the obedience of Christ led to vindication for him and for all those who are 'in him', and the consequence of his acquittal is life." Hooker, *From Adam to Christ*, 29-31.

⁵⁰Vos, *Pauline Eschatology*, 151.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 151.

⁵²One can also affirm more than Vos does here as one considers the juxtaposition of the terms *de facto* and *de jure*. If *de facto* denotes a reality that exists regardless of whether or not it exists legally or by right (e.g., English is the *de facto* official language of the United States whether or not any legal document declares it so simply because it is the language spoken), then one is right to affirm that the resurrection is Christ's *de facto* justification. The mere presence of life declares justification. However, if *de jure* denotes a reality that exists by legal right (e.g., The King James Bible is the *de jure* official version of the Bible read in a church because the bylaws legally declare that it is so), then one may also affirm that

Scripture confirms this conclusion as well. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 3:16 that Christ has been “justified by the Spirit,”⁵³ which most agree is a reference to Christ’s resurrection carried out through the agency of the Spirit.⁵⁴ Moreover, if Christ’s resurrection is needed to justify him because he had died as the condemned one, then it should be apparent that the resurrection was a necessary act *precisely because* of the nature of Christ’s atoning death. Because Jesus was the righteous Son of God (the obedient second/last Adam), he could not remain under the wrathful condemnation of the Father, which he bore in his death. Thus, far from being disconnected from the resurrection, it is Christ’s penal substitutionary death which demands the resurrection.

Justification, Resurrection, and the Believer

Because of the believer’s union with Christ, however, that which Christ does and receives does not affect him alone. As established already in this chapter, the representative union that exists between Christ and believers declares that what Christ does and receives is credited to those “in him.” Therefore, if Christ’s resurrection proves the legal declaration of his righteous status, then believers should expect to see Christ’s

the resurrection is Jesus’ *de jure* justification since justification cannot rightly (indeed, legally) be withheld from him in light of his perfect obedience/righteousness. Therefore, one should affirm that the resurrection of Christ was his *de facto* and *de jure* justification. See Fesko, *Justification*, 323.

⁵³This reflects my own translation of ἐδικαιώθη ἐν πνεύματι.

⁵⁴See, for example, I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), 78; Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 280; William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, WBC, vol. 46 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000), 227; Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 184-85; Michael F. Bird, “Justified by Christ’s Resurrection: A Neglected Aspect of Paul’s Doctrine of Justification,” *SBET* 22, no. 1 (2004): 86; Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, 270-71; Pinnock, “Salvation by Resurrection,” 5; Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 53; Ridderbos, *Paul*, 538; Tipton, “Union with Christ,” 28; Fesko, *Justification*, 303; Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 119-22. Compare the Spirit’s role in the resurrection in Rom 1:4, where Paul writes, “[Jesus] was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.”

resurrection bringing about their own justification. And this is precisely what one finds in Romans 4:25.

Paul writes in Romans 4:25 that Jesus “was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.” The first half of the verse highlights Jesus’ identification with believers in their condemnation—Christ pays the penalty for their sin.⁵⁵ The second half underscores the connection between Christ’s resurrection and believers’ justification. The details of this connection become apparent as one understands that Christ’s resurrection means that *Christ* has received a legal sentence of justification. The resurrected Christ is nothing less than the one who has received the legal sentence that he is righteous. Therefore, if believers are united to Christ in such a way that what Christ does *and receives* is determinative for them, then one may conclude that as Christ’s resurrection displays that he has received a declaration of righteousness, so believers receive a declaration of righteousness as well as they are united with the resurrected Christ by faith.⁵⁶ This explains the logic of Romans 4:25. *Christ* is raised, and (because he is in representative union with believers) it is for *our* justification.⁵⁷

⁵⁵Letham, *Work of Christ*; 84; Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 122; Schreiner, *Romans*, 243; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 47; Jeffery, Ovey, Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 85-86. Some see here a quotation or deliberate allusion to Isa 53:5-6, 12, including Wright, *Romans*, 503; Fitzmyer, *Romans*, 389; Moo, *Romans*, 288-89; Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God*, 196; Jeffery, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 186; Cranfield, *Romans*, 1:251.

⁵⁶So Grudem rightly notes, “By virtue of our union with Christ, God’s declaration of approval of Christ is also his declaration of approval for us,” (*Systematic Theology*, 615); cf. Rich Lusk, “A Response to ‘The Biblical Plan of Salvation,’” in *The Auburn Avenue Theology, Pros and Cons: Debating the Federal Vision*, ed. E. Calvin Beisner (Fort Lauderdale, FL: Knox Theological Seminary, 2004), 141.

⁵⁷For support of this explanation of Rom 4:25, see I. Howard Marshall, *Aspects of the Atonement: Cross and Resurrection in the Reconciling of God and Humanity* (Colorado Springs: Paternoster, 2007), 80-97; Tipton, “Union with Christ and Justification,” 30-38; Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., “Justification and Eschatology,” in *Justified in Christ: God’s Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott

This understanding of Christ's resurrection and the benefit for believers also makes sense of Paul's claim in 1 Corinthians 15:17: "And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins." Because Christ's death was one in which he bore the condemnation brought about because of Adam's sin, if Christ is not raised then he is under the condemnation of God. Furthermore, because believers are in union with Christ so that what Christ does and receives is determinative for them, then if Christ is not raised they are in union with one who remains under the condemnation of God.⁵⁸ Thus, if Christ were not raised, they would remain in sin and under condemnation. This is the precise argument of 1 Corinthians 15:17. If believers are justified via their union with Christ, it is not only necessary that Christ dies on the cross, bearing the penalty for man's sin, but that he is also raised up so as to be under condemnation no more and receive his justifying verdict.

Were one to stop with believers receiving a justifying verdict, however, it would do injustice both to the connection between righteousness, justification, and life revealed in Romans 5 as well as the full nature of Christ's own justification. Romans 5:12-21 and the nature of Christ's resurrection each serves to remind the believer that the justification of the believer necessarily includes both a judicial declaration of his righteousness in this life and a public demonstration of that justifying verdict in life.

Again, this reality is evident from the connection drawn in Romans 5:12-21.

Oliphant (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2007), 6; idem, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 122-34; idem, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 160; Fesko, *Justification*, 301-27; Seifrid, *Christ, Our Righteousness*, 46-47.

⁵⁸Gaffin rightly notes, "It is then, not only meaningful but necessary to speak of the resurrection as the redemption of Christ. . . . The resurrection is the salvation of Jesus as the last Adam; it and no other event in his experience is the point of *his* transition from wrath to grace." Gaffin, *Redemption and Resurrection*, 116 (emphasis original); cf. idem, "Atonement in the Pauline Corpus," 160.

As verse 18 reminds the reader, Christ's righteousness results in justification which results in life.⁵⁹ The connection between Christ's righteousness and the legal sentence of justification manifested in life is no less certain than the connection between Adam's sin and the legal sentence of condemnation manifested in death.⁶⁰ Therefore, just as Romans 5:12-21 leaves no possibility of one falling under condemnation and not being affected by death, so it leaves no possibility of one being justified and not experiencing eternal life—that which is fully experienced only in resurrection. Thus, the division between justification and transformation drawn by Green in his attack on penal substitution is an artificial one.⁶¹ The transformation of believers in the resurrection is not only connected to the justification of those individuals, their sentence of justification is the foundation that ensures they will be resurrected.⁶²

Second, if indeed salvation is experienced in terms of union with Christ so that what Christ does and receives is determinative for those "in him," then one should consider the justification of believers in light of Christ's own justification. In Christ's resurrection, the judicial declaration of his justification is evidenced in the reality that he

⁵⁹"Life" here most likely refers to that life in the "eschatological future," the "life" on the last day; so Moo, *Romans*, 341 n. 126. Seifrid rightly notes that "Paul is not thinking merely of a verdict here, but of the enactment of that verdict in our resurrection" (*Christ, Our Righteousness*, 71).

⁶⁰Again, Schreiner's comment is helpful here, as he notes, "Verse 17 functions as the ground of verse 16 (γάρ, *gar*, for). What is the evidence that all are condemned through Adam and all are righteous in Christ? The evidence for universal condemnation is the reign of death over all people by virtue of Adam, and the evidence for the gift of righteousness is the reigning in life that becomes a reality through Jesus Christ" (*Romans*, 285-86).

⁶¹Green, "Must We Imagine?," 166.

⁶²It is true that Green is perhaps thinking of transformation in this life (i.e., prior to the resurrection). However, all life experienced by the believer is resurrection life. The believer's life now is nothing less than the already aspect of resurrection life that he will not yet experience fully until the resurrection. Therefore, to draw a division between transformation in this life and transformation at the resurrection is an artificial division as well.

is raised to die no more. Christ's resurrection signaled not only his justification but served as an eschatological demonstration of that justification as his body was raised from the dead.⁶³ As noted, Christ's body was the first to be sown in weakness and raised in power and glory (1 Cor 15:43). Therefore, if what Christ receives is determinative for believers, then believers' justification must be evidenced in bodily transformation as well. Christ must not only be the first to be raised in evidence of his justification but "the firstborn *among many brothers*" (Rom 8:29).

In light of the logic of Romans 5:12-21 and the model of Christ's own justification, one must conclude that the believer's present justification necessarily results in transformation to life in the resurrection.⁶⁴ Christ's resurrection was an eschatological demonstration of his justification, and the believer waits—with certain hope—for that same public demonstration of his justification on that final day. Thus, it is the forensic judgment of individuals that guarantees their sure and certain resurrection, the redemption of their bodies (Rom 8:23).

The Resurrection of Sons and the Restoration of the Created Order

There is still one more element left to address in this chapter, however. How are individuals connected to creation? More specifically, why is it that the resurrection of

⁶³"Eschatological" because Christ's resurrection body is the first reality of the new creation. See Ridderbos, *Paul*, 169; Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 93; Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 92-93; G. K. Beale, "The New Testament and New Creation," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect & Prospect*, ed. Scott J. Hafemann (Downers Grove, IL: InverVarsity, 2002), 164.

⁶⁴Bird, "Justified by Christ's Resurrection," 83-89; Seifrid, "Righteousness, Justice, and Justification," 743; Fesko, *Justification*, 306; Michael S. Horton, *Covenant and Salvation: Union with Christ* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 279; William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, ed. and trans. John D. Eusden (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 172; Gaffin, "Justification and Eschatology," 14-15.

individuals brings about the restoration of the created order? This question is important because Green charges that an atonement which focuses on the forensic judgment of *individuals* cannot bring about God's purpose to restore the cosmos. One part of the answer has already been supplied in showing that the forensic declaration of justification necessarily entails an eschatological demonstration of that legal judgment in believers' resurrection. Thus, the proposed dichotomy between the forensic nature of Christ's work and the transformative nature of salvation is unfounded. This final section will supply the second part of the answer, showing that it is only when believers experience the full privileges of salvation that the cosmos will be restored. Specifically, this final section will argue that the eschatological demonstration of believers' justification in their resurrection also entails the restoration of the full privileges of sonship and, thus, the redemption of creation.

Adam's Sin and the Loss of the Full Privileges of Sonship

It has already been noted in chapter two of this study that Adam was not simply on par with the rest of creation. Rather, he was made to rule over the created order, exercising dominion over the earth as God's image-bearer, vice-regent, and son, crowned with glory and honor. Therefore, when Adam sinned against the Lord and brought condemnation upon himself and all mankind, the created order was subjected to a reign of death—which served as evidence of universal condemnation.

The implication of Adam's sin is that he "spoiled"⁶⁵ his vice-regency and

⁶⁵Dan G. McCartney, "Ecce Homo: The Coming of the Kingdom as the Restoration of Human Vicegerency," *Westminster Theological Journal* 56 (1994): 3.

forfeited the full privileges of divine sonship.⁶⁶ That is, Adam's surrender of his role as son to a reign of death meant that creation no longer reflected the life and glory once experienced under Adam's wise rule.⁶⁷ Therefore, it should come as no surprise to find Paul claiming that "creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God" (Rom 8:19). That is, the hope of the created order is anthropological. Creation "groans" for that day when individuals will again reflect the full privileges of sonship so that all of creation might reflect that same glory, experiencing the benefits of the wise rule of man (Rom 8:22).

Therefore, when Paul pictures the manifestation of believers' justification in their resurrection, those themes which first surfaced with Adam prior to the fall (e.g., divine image-bearing, sonship, and glory) reappear. Paul speaks of believers' resurrection as their glorification (8:17, 21, 30), as their being conformed to the image of Christ (8:29), and as their revealing as sons (8:19, 23). Furthermore, he argues that when believers' sonship is revealed (8:19) the "creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (8:21). The reason for this is because whereas Adam was condemned and forfeited the full privileges of sonship so that creation suffered, the resurrection will serve as the demonstration that

⁶⁶Ferguson notes, "From this high dignity and these privileges, man fell. The image of God was fractured; the offices God gave to man were brought into disrepute as he disqualified himself from exercising them. True sonship to God thus became a memory of the past, a lost and unrecoverable privilege forfeited by sin." Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Children of the Living God* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1989), 8. See also, Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 111; David B. Garner, "The First and Last Son: Christology and Sonship in Pauline Soteriology," in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church*, ed. Lane G. Tipton and Jeffrey C. Waddington (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 265-66.

⁶⁷See Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, NAC, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 164, 170-71.

man has been justified and the full privileges of sonship have been restored so that creation might be redeemed. This reality, too, is rooted in believers' union with Christ and what his justification entailed.

Christ's Justification and Appointment as Son of God

The Scripture not only pictures Christ's resurrection as his justification but as his appointment as "son of God."⁶⁸ In Romans 1:3-4, Paul writes that Jesus Christ "was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead." Numerous scholars agree, however, that "declared" is probably not the best translation of ὁρισθέντος and that it should be translated along the lines of "appointed"⁶⁹ so that the idea of sonship in Romans 1:4 is best seen in terms of a new "stage"⁷⁰ of universal sovereignty that Jesus

⁶⁸By "son of God," I mean that title which Adam, Israel, and the king of Israel bear in the Scripture. My aim is to show that Jesus fulfills the office first given to Adam and promised through David's line (i.e., a man, literally descended from David). Because of this I have written "son of God" with a lowercase "s," seeking to show that this title does not necessarily intend deity. However, ultimately Christ comes as one who fulfills this role and was/is the Son of God (God, the Son) from eternity past (before, during, and after his coming into the world). Throughout this section, however, I will leave "son" with a lowercase "s," whenever denoting that role meant to be filled by a man, even when that man is the God-man, Jesus.

⁶⁹So, for example, Moo, *Romans*, 47-48; Schreiner, *Romans*, 38-44; James M. Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of ΥΙΟΘΕΣΙΑ in the Pauline Corpus* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr: 1992) 256-63; Martin Hengel, *Studies in Early Christology* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995), 375; Trevor J. Burke, *Adopted into God's Family: Exploring a Pauline Metaphor*, NSBT, vol. 22 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2006), 104; Murray, *Romans*, 9-10; Ernst Käsemann, *Commentary on Romans*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 11; J. R. Daniel Kirk, "Appointed Son(s): An Exegetical Note on Romans 1:4 and 8:29," *BBR* 14, no. 2 (2004): 241-42; Otto Betz, *What Do We Know About Jesus?* trans. Margaret Kohl (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1968), 98; Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 103-05; Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 117-18.

⁷⁰Burke, *Adopted into God's Family*, 104; Douglas J. Moo, "The Christology of the Early Pauline Letters," in *Contours of Christology in the New Testament*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 183; Schreiner, *Romans*, 42; Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 104; Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 100-04; Eduard Schweizer, "The Concept of the

enters into via his resurrection or an “office”⁷¹ which Jesus is granted as the resurrected God-*man*.

Some have rejected this translation out of fear that it would denote adoptionism,⁷² which denies both the pre-existence and deity of the Son.⁷³ Such an objection, however, is built upon an understanding that the title “son of God” only entails deity. But, as shown in chapter two of this study, the title “son of God” was one given to man (first Adam, then Israel) as God’s representative rulers over creation since “the task of ruling the world for God belongs to human beings.”⁷⁴ Thus, it is only a man who may bear the title in this sense,⁷⁵ and it is a role to which Jesus (as the God-*man*) is appointed via his resurrection. Such a claim does not rest on linguistic connections between Adam

Davidic ‘Son of God’ in Acts and Its Old Testament Background,” in *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 187.

⁷¹Geerhardus Vos, *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus: The Modern Debate about the Messianic Consciousness*, ed. Johannes G. Vos (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954; reprint, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), 141-42; Kenneth Schenck, “Keeping His Appointment: Creation and Enthronement in Hebrews,” *JSNT* 66 (1997): 104.

⁷²For a discussion on adoptionism and why it should be rejected, see Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 245-46.

⁷³Robert Reymond is one example of someone who rejects “appointed” as the translation of ὀρισθέντος for fear that it entails an “adoptionistic” Christology. He writes, “We should realize immediately that something is amiss in our exegesis if . . . we conclude that Paul teaches that at his resurrection Jesus was ‘constituted’ or ‘appointed’ as ‘son of God.’ . . . Paul cannot mean that Jesus was ‘appointed’ or ‘constituted’ the Son of God at the point of or by reason of his resurrection from the dead” (Robert L. Reymond, *Jesus Divine Messiah: The New and Old Testament Witness* [Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2003], 376-81). Reymond also notes that his view is the traditional one, and he is correct on this point. Warfield, Hodge, and Calvin all shy away from the language of “appointed.” See Benjamin B. Warfield, “The Christ that Paul Preached,” in vol. 2 of *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. Ethelbert D. Warfield et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 244; Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1893), 26-27; John Calvin, *Commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, in vol. 19 of *Calvin’s Commentaries*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 46.

⁷⁴Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 381.

⁷⁵Of course “Son of God” can also denote deity and only the second person of the Trinity who took on flesh, died, was raised, and ascended back into heaven bears the title in that sense.

and Christ alone, however, but is revealed through the promises of the Old Testament and the manner in which Christ's resurrection is understood in the New.

The promise of sonship. Few chapters pass from the moment Adam sins in the garden until the Lord reveals his intention to restore the full privileges of sonship. First, God promises Abraham descendants who will be kings in a land which they will inherit (Gen 12:1-9; 15; 17:1-8).⁷⁶ Then, after Israel's obvious failure to fulfill this task, God promises David that he will "raise up" a descendant from him who will reign forever. In 2 Samuel 7:12-14, God says to David,

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son.⁷⁷

This promise provides a couple of details crucial for understanding Jesus' appointment as "son of God." The first is that the one whom God will raise up⁷⁸ is David's offspring

⁷⁶Gen 49:8-12 specifically speaks of a single king coming from the line of Judah, Abraham's grandson. Adams notes, "The blessing promised to Abraham [and] to those who follow in the footsteps of his faith is nothing less than 'the restoration of God's created order, of man to his Adamic status as steward of the rest of God's creation.'" Edward Adams, "Paul's Story of God and Creation: The Story of How God Fulfills His Purposes in Creation," in *Narrative Dynamics in Paul: A Critical Assessment*, ed. Bruce W. Longenecker (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 35.

⁷⁷The text goes on to say, "When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I will put away from before you" (2 Sam 7:14-15). Therefore, there is a sense in which this speaks of David's immediate son, Solomon, and those kings who will come from him. He will sin, God will discipline him, but he will not remove his steadfast love from David's offspring (demonstrated in the fact that it is always a Davidic descendant reigning over Judah). However, promising to "'establish the throne of his kingdom forever' seems to vault this portion of the prophecy beyond the bounds of Solomon's reign and give it eschatological and/or messianic overtones." Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, NAC, vol. 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 340. See also, Bill T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, NIVAp (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 476, 489-90; A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, WBC, vol. 11 (Dallas: Word, 1988), 121-23.

⁷⁸The phrase "raise up" ultimately comes to be understood as important language in light of Christ's resurrection. So Schweizer, "The Concept of the Davidic 'Son of God,'" 190; Mark L. Strauss,

“who shall come from [his] body.” That is, the promised offspring whom God will raise up to reign must be a man, from the flesh of David. Therefore, the reader is again reminded that God’s intention is for man to rule over the earth, as first began with Adam. The second is that, in declaring that the coming king will be a “son” to him, God is showing that the “Davidic King is inheriting both the role of Adam as son of God and Israel as son of God.”⁷⁹ Thus, in the Davidic covenant, God provides hope for the restoration of human vice-regency and a restoration of the full privileges of sonship.

One might note here, however, that the promise does not necessarily appear to express worldwide dominion as was the apparent intention for God’s son (Adam) in the garden. However, there are three indications that God intends on his “son” reigning over all the earth. The first is in Psalm 89. This chapter reflects on the covenant God made with David in 2 Samuel 7,⁸⁰ and in this context God declares of David his servant, “I will make him the firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth” (Ps 89:27). Therefore, God establishes that the “son” (the “firstborn”) that he will raise up in accordance with the covenant established with David will be a king who is exalted and reigns above all the kings of the earth. By definition, then, if the promised son reigns above all the kings of the earth, his reign necessarily extends to that area over which they “reign.”

“The Davidic Messiah in Luke-Acts: The Promise and Its Fulfillment in Lukan Christology,” *TynBul* 44, no. 2 (1993): 387; Betz, *What Do We Know about Jesus?*, 96-99; Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 339-40.

⁷⁹Peter J. Gentry, “Rethinking the ‘Sure Mercies of David’ in Isaiah 55:3,” *WTJ* 69, no. 2 (2007): 286. See also, Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 147; Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*, 234-35; Carson, *Matthew 1-12*, 92; Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT, vol. 15 (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003), 231-34; Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 107-21; McCartney, “*Ecce Homo*,” 3-7.

⁸⁰So Shalom M. Paul, “Adoption Formulae: A Study of Cuneiform and Biblical Legal Clauses,” *Maarav* 2, no. 2 (1979-80): 178; David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms*, JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 247; Vos, *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus*, 192; Schweizer, “The Concept of the Davidic ‘Son of God,’” 189.

The second indication that the promised Davidic king would reign over all the earth is found in Psalm 2. This psalm is an enthronement or coronation psalm, a psalm that declared the installation of the Davidic king.⁸¹ In light of the covenant declaration that the Davidic descendant would be a “son” to God, the psalmist declares that the “decree” of the Lord in establishing the Davidic descendant as king is, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you,” to which the Lord adds, “Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession” (Ps 2:7-8). Therefore, Psalm 2 makes clear that the promised Davidic “son,” whom the Lord would one day appoint and enthrone as king, would reign over all the earth.⁸² The fact, however, that this universal rule was never realized under David nor anyone after him (until Jesus), shows that the Psalm points ultimately beyond David and all of his descendants prior to Jesus.⁸³

⁸¹Willem A. Vangemeren, *Psalms*, in vol. 5 of *EBC*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelien (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1991), 70; Joel Marcus, *The Way of the Lord: Christological Exegesis of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Mark* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1992), 69; Moo, *Romans*, 48; Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 147; Leslie C. Allen, “The Old Testament Background of (Προ)δριζειν in the New Testament,” *NTS* 17 (1970): 104; Attridge, *Hebrews*, 53.

⁸²Mettinger helpfully notes, “Two observations show that the king’s status as ‘son’ is initiated at a definite point in time. (a) V. 7b is formulated as a performative utterance. (b) The use of the word *hăyyôm*, ‘this day’, is to be compared here with that in other instances to indicate the formal initiation of a legal contract (Ruth 4, 9-10; Gn 25, 31.33).” He also adds, “As son, the king is also heir and inherits the ‘nations’ and the ‘ends of the earth’ (v. 8). Thus, the king enjoys world-wide dominion, as ‘he who sits in heaven’ (v. 4) has delegated his power to him.” Tryggve Mettinger, N. D., *King and Messiah: The Civil and Sacral Legitimation of the Israelite Kings* (Lund: LiberLäromedel/Gleerup, 1976), 261-62.

⁸³Also, certain texts referencing the Davidic king who would come seem to use language too great for any man. It appears the one who comes must be divine, though simultaneously must be from “David’s body.” One of these texts is Isa 9:6-7, which speaks of a “son” being given to rule on the throne of David, but he is also called “Mighty God.” Another text is Ps 45, a psalm which addresses the Davidic king, but says to him, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever” (Ps 45:6). Though it would have been fitting to refer to the Davidic king in this way, their constant failures to resemble and represent God push the reader to look for one who is no less than God himself. Ultimately, such texts push the reader to look for Jesus, the God-man.

The third indicator that the promise to the Davidic “son” was one of universal rule is seen in 2 Samuel 7 itself. After receiving the covenant promise from the Lord, David declares in 2 Samuel 7:19, “You have spoken also of your servant’s house for a great while to come, and this is instruction for mankind, O Lord GOD!” Gentry explains well the sense of this verse:

In the ancient Near East, a country or region was thought to be ruled by the god of that territory, and the king was considered the representative of the local god. This explains how the king could be called the son of God. . . . However, since the god whom the Davidic King represented was not limited to a local region or territory, but was the Creator God and the Sovereign of the whole world, the rule of the Davidic King would have repercussions for **all** the nations, not just for Israel. This is developed in Ps 2 and many other psalms, but is *already* suggested in 2 Sam 7. Thus . . . the Davidic Son would effect the divine rule in the entire world, much as God intended for humanity in the covenant of creation as indicated by the divine image in Gen 1:26ff. This, I submit, is the logic behind David’s response in v. 19.⁸⁴

As one who is a “son” to the God who created and rules over the world, David understands that the promise that his offspring would be *Yahweh’s* son is a promise that his offspring would rule over all the earth—even as had been pictured by Adam in the beginning.

Therefore, not only does God provide a picture of Adam’s rule through Israel as they come into Canaan and subdue the land, but he also makes a promise that one day he will “raise up” one from David’s line who will fulfill the role that was first pictured in Adam. The longing from the point of the fall is for a return to glory—to the full privileges of sonship. After the Davidic covenant, God’s apparent means to this end are revealed, as God’s people long for the one whom the Lord would appoint as his king, declaring, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you” (Ps 2:7).

⁸⁴Gentry, “Rethinking the ‘Sure Mercies of David,’” 288 (bold and italics original).

The arrival and appointment of the Son. As Jesus comes into the world, he comes as one who is divine. He is God, the Son. But he also comes as man. Therefore, as noted already in this chapter, when Luke connects his narrative of Jesus' baptism, genealogy, and temptation together with the repetition of "son of God," he is showing the reader that Jesus is coming in the role of Adam, the son of God.

But, one might question, if Jesus comes already in his identity as the true son of God, noted specifically by his Father at his baptism, then how can he be appointed son of God by his resurrection from the dead? Comparing this reality to the kingdom of God and to David's own appointment to the throne, Betz helpfully sheds light on this issue:

The position [of] Jesus' messianic dignity is the same as that [of] the kingdom of God, which has already come to men through the defeat of the devil (Matt. 12:28) but has not yet been realized 'in power' (cf. Mark 9.1). Thus the earthly Jesus had already been anointed Messiah with the Spirit [at his baptism] and worked in the power of this Spirit, but was enthroned and thus named Son of God only at Easter. One need only think of David, the father of Jesus according to the flesh: he was chosen and anointed king at a very early stage, but he had to wait a long time until he was raised to be king "in power" (cf. I Sam. 16 and II Sam. 5).⁸⁵

Therefore, even as David was identified as king by the Lord and only enthroned as such at a later time, so Jesus comes into the world as the true and obedient son of God and yet waits for the day when he is appointed as such, for the "today" when the Father

⁸⁵Betz, *What Do We Know about Jesus?*, 98. Vos similarly lays a foundation helpful in seeing how Jesus can be appointed Son of God while having already been identified as Son of God, writing, "[Jesus] sometimes refers to the eschatological crisis as '*the coming* of the Kingdom of God,' just as if no kingdom truly worthy of the name had previously existed: 'For I say unto you I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come' (Luke 22:16-18). Notice, He does not say, 'until the kingdom shall be perfected,' nor 'until the eschatological form of the kingdom shall come,' but simply '*until the kingdom of God shall come.*' In precisely the same way Jesus refers to His Messianic appearance as a future thing. He speaks of His *parousia*, His advent. We put into such statements, if not explicitly at least by implication, the idea of a *coming again* on the basis of the familiar distinction between a 'first' and a 'second' advent. . . . We miss the fine point of such sayings if we fail to observe that to Jesus the *parousia* was the coming of the Messiah, because then, and not before then, He would appear in the adequacy of His Messianic character." Vos, *The Self-Disclosure of Jesus*, 82-83 (emphasis original).

announces his decree: “You are my Son; today I have begotten you” (Ps 2:7). He is the son who will be appointed as son.⁸⁶

Therefore, in light of God’s promises and decrees in the Old Testament, one is led to read the New Testament looking for the one who would be David’s great son, the fulfillment of God’s promise. Additionally, one looks to the time, in accord with Psalm 2:7, when that son is appointed as God’s king over the earth. Having already identified Jesus as the true son (even as Luke indicates early in his gospel), it is then fitting to look for the New Testament authors’ use of Psalm 2:7 in order to see when they understood this promise to have been fulfilled. After all, if the New Testament authors designate a time or event at which the divine decree of enthronement is fulfilled, then it is almost certain that they are showing the reader the time or event at which God has appointed one as his king over the earth.⁸⁷

When one looks at the use of Psalm 2:7 in the New Testament it is apparent that the New Testament authors considered the resurrection of Jesus as the fulfillment of the divine decree.⁸⁸ In Acts 13, as Paul preached in Antioch of Pisidia, he reminds the reader of the Davidic covenant, as he proclaims, “Of this man’s offspring God has

⁸⁶Rightly Moo, *Romans*, 48; Scott, *Adoption as Son of God*, 234.

⁸⁷So Chip Anderson, “Romans 1:1-5 and the Occasion of the Letter: The Solution to the Two-Congregation Problem in Rome,” *TrinJ* 14, no. 1 (1993): 33; see also Mettinger, *King and Messiah*, 261; Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1981), 109; Schweizer, “The Concept of the Davidic ‘Son of God,’” 190.

⁸⁸So Paul Beasley-Murray, “Romans 1:3f: An Early Confession of Faith in the Lordship of Jesus,” *TynBul* 31 (1980): 153; Moo, *Romans*, 48; idem, “The Christology of the Early Pauline Letters,” 183; Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 41, 103, 143; Schreiner, *Romans*, 42-44; Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel*, 109; Anderson, “Romans 1:1-5 and the Occasion of the Letter,” 34; Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, 104; Fesko, *Justification*, 300-03; Dunn, *Romans 1-8*, 13-14. Ferguson also sees the resurrection as the moment of Christ’s appointment as son of God (the fulfillment of the decree of Ps 2:7), but he describes this appointment as Jesus’ adoption (Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 104). Similarly, see Tipton, “Union with Christ and Justification,” 27-28; Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 117-19.

brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised” (Acts 13:23). Thus, he clearly identifies Jesus as the one who was promised in the Davidic covenant. Then, Paul adds, “And we bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus, as also it is written in the second Psalm, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you’” (Acts 13:32-33). Therefore, he sees God’s promise ultimately fulfilled as he enthrones this one as king and, consequently, as son. And he specifically notes that God fulfilled this promise “by raising Jesus.” In Paul’s mind, then, God installs his king, decreeing him as son, as he raises Jesus from the dead.⁸⁹

Psalm 2:7 also appears in Hebrews 1:5.⁹⁰ Chapter one begins with a context one might be able to anticipate in light of Old Testament background. The author remarks that “in these last days, [God] has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things” (Heb 1:2). Thus, the language of appointment is already present as well as inheritance (which was present with Adam, as the earth was his, and with Israel, as they inherited the Promised Land).⁹¹ Additionally, in light of the connection with

⁸⁹For support that Paul teaches Jesus’ enthronement via his resurrection specifically in Acts 13, see Schweizer, “The Concept of the Davidic ‘Son of God,’” 186-90; Betz, *What Do We Know about Jesus?*, 100; Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 117-19 (of course, Gaffin uses the language of “adoption” to describe what Murray and Vos referred to as “appointment”); Darrell L. Bock, *Acts*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 456.

⁹⁰Ps 2:7 is also quoted in Heb 5:5. However, Guthrie notes that there it “plays more of a structural role than a theological role. . . . Its primary function is to aid in introducing Ps. 110:4, which then becomes a focus in the author’s discussion on Christ’s appointment as a superior, Melchizedekian high priest” (George H. Guthrie, “Hebrews,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007], 960). Similarly, concerning Hebrews 5:5ff., Attridge notes, “Our author may not, in fact, have any temporal association for these verses in view. He is much more concerned for the fact that God reveals Christ to be both Son and High Priest than he is about the points at which those titles are applicable” (Attridge, *Hebrews*, 147); cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 118; Paul Ellingworth, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 281. Therefore, I will not focus explicitly on Heb 5:5, as I believe it in no way undermines the conclusions drawn from the examination of the use of Ps 2 in Acts 13 and Heb 1.

sonship and image which man demonstrated in the beginning as he was crowned with glory, Jesus is said to be “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature” (Heb 1:3). Thus, he is presented as the one who fulfills everything pictured by Adam in his glorious state and is much more, as he is himself God (the *God-man*). Finally, he states that Jesus has “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high” and has inherited a name that is more excellent than that of the angels, namely, “Son” (Heb 1:3-4).⁹² And it is in light of those statements that the author of Hebrews (in showing Jesus’ superiority to angels), says, “For to which of the angels did God ever say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you?’” Or again, ‘I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son?’” (Heb 1:5), connecting again the promise of 2 Samuel 7:14 and the decree of Psalm 2:7.

It is not immediately clear at what point the author sees the decree of Psalm 2:7 fulfilled. However, more light is shed upon this in Hebrews 2:5-10. In 2:5, the author continues showing the superiority of Jesus to angels by noting that “it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come.” He then proceeds to quote Psalm 8:4-6, a text which describes the scene of Genesis 1:26-28 as God subjects the created order to man, crowning him with glory and honor. Upon quoting this, the author directs the reader to recognize that the full privileges of sonship are no longer displayed, as he writes, “At

⁹¹Attridge notes that Christ’s appointment and inheritance in Hebrews 1:2 is “ultimately based on such texts as Ps 2:8.” Attridge, *Hebrews*, 39-40; cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 12; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 94-96; Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 47.

⁹²This is evident from the flow of the verses. In 1:4-5, the author declares that “the name he has inherited is more excellent than [angels’]. For to which of the angels did God every say, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you?’” For arguments that the name is “son,” see Attridge, *Hebrews*, 47; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 17; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 106; against Bauckham, who thinks the name here is the Tetragrammaton. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 239.

present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him [i.e., to man]”⁹³ (Heb 2:8).

Then, he notes that what the reader can see is Jesus “crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death” (Heb 2:9).⁹⁴ And it is here that the author indicates to the reader the time at which Jesus is appointed as son, for if Jesus is crowned with glory and honor “because of suffering of death,” then he is necessarily crowned *after* his suffering of death. Therefore, it is highly likely that the author sees the resurrection (and exaltation)⁹⁵ as the point at which Jesus is appointed as son – the point at which Psalm 2:7 is fulfilled (especially when seen in combination with Paul’s preaching in Acts 13:32-33).⁹⁶

Therefore, the use of Psalm 2:7 in the New Testament seems to assert that Christ’s appointment as son takes place via his resurrection. But the New Testament’s

⁹³Some take this “him” as referring to Jesus (Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 150-152; Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 100; George H. Guthrie and Russell D. Quinn, “A Discourse Analysis of the Use of Psalm 8.4-6 in Hebrews 2.5-9,” *JETS* 49, no. 2 [2006]: 235-46, but it is more likely referring simply to man, so Craig L. Blomberg, “‘But We See Jesus’: The Relationship between the Son of Man in Hebrews 2.6 and 2.9 and the Implications for English Translations,” in *A Cloud of Witnesses: The Theology of Hebrews in its Ancient Contexts*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (New York: T&T Clark, 2008); McCartney, “*Ecce Homo*,” 4.

⁹⁴As the Lord crowned man with glory and honor “putting everything in subjection under his feet,” Jesus’ being “crowned with glory and honor” should also be understood as indicating his receiving universal sovereignty and rule. So Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 48; Jeffrey, Ovey, and Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, 134; Guthrie, *Hebrews*, 96-100; Blomberg, “But We See Jesus,” 96; David Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection: An Examination of the Concept of Perfection in the ‘Epistle to the Hebrews’* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 121.

⁹⁵The resurrection and exaltation of Christ appear to be seen broadly as one act. Thus, Ellingworth (*Hebrews*, 114) notes that the fulfillment of Ps 2:7 in Heb 1:5 “points strongly to . . . the Son’s exaltation, which the author may not have distinguished from resurrection.” Similarly, Lane (*Hebrews 1-8*, 16) writes, “In v 3 [1:3], and elsewhere, an allusion to the position at God’s right hand apparently served as an inclusive reference to Jesus’ resurrection, ascension, and continuing exaltation.” Similarly, Attridge, *Hebrews*, 53 (esp. n. 44); Guthrie, “Hebrews,” 928; idem, *Hebrews*, 68-69.

⁹⁶Attridge (*Hebrews*, 53-54) notes that this conclusion is “most likely.” For further support, see also Guthrie, “Hebrews,” 927; idem, *Hebrews*, 68-69; Lane, *Hebrews 1-8*, 25-26; Ellingworth, *Hebrews*, 113-14.

use of Psalm 2:7 is not the only point which teaches that Jesus was appointed as son of God by his resurrection. As this section began, it is also argued in Romans 1:3-4.

In Romans 1:3-4, Paul opens his letter:

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart from the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was appointed to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.⁹⁷

In these verses, not only does Paul identify Jesus as one “who was descended from David according to the flesh” (i.e., showing that he is the one who has been “raised up” from David’s body in accord with the promise of 2 Sam 7:12-14) but also notes that he was “appointed to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead.” Thus, Paul confirms that by Jesus’ resurrection, he was appointed as the promised Davidic King; he was enthroned as the promised son about whom God spoke, saying, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”⁹⁸

This conclusion is also reinforced in Matthew 28:18, where Jesus, after his resurrection from the dead, proclaims to his disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”⁹⁹ By his resurrection, Jesus has been appointed to the

⁹⁷This reflects my translation of ὀρισθέντος as “appointed.”

⁹⁸So Moo, *Romans*, 47-50; Schreiner, *Romans*, 38-45; Scott, *Adoption as Sons*, 235-57; Betz, *What Do We Know about Jesus?*, 95; Schweizer, “The Concept of the Davidic ‘Son of God,’” 187; I. Howard Marshall, “The Christology of Luke’s Gospel and Acts,” in *Contours of Christology in the New Testament*, ed. Richard N. Longenecker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 141-43; Christopher G. Whitsett, “Son of God, Seed of David: Paul’s Messianic Exegesis in Romans [1]:3-4,” *JBL* 119, no. 4 (2000): 674-76; Anderson, “Romans 1:1-5 and the Occasion of the Letter,” 32; Burke, *Adopted into God’s Family*, 104; Murray, *Romans*, 9; Kim, *The Origin of Paul’s Gospel*, 109; Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, 100-111.

⁹⁹Carson, commenting on Matt 28:18, writes, “The Son becomes the one through whom all God’s authority is mediated. He is, as it were, the mediatorial King. This well-defined exercise of authority is given Jesus as the climactic vindication of his humiliation (cf. Phil 2:5-11); and it marks a turning point in redemptive history, for Messiah’s ‘kingdom’ . . . has dawned in new power.” D. A. Carson,

position pre-figured in Adam, promised to David, and spoken of in Psalm 2. He has been given authority to reign over all the earth as his inheritance. As the God-man, he is enthroned as the promised “son of God.”

The restoration of the privileges of sonship. When one turns to Romans 8:12-30, then, and finds the elements connected with Adam prior to the fall (sonship, image-bearing, inheritance, and glory), it is apparent that Paul is showing that the “glory that is to be revealed” (Rom 8:18) is nothing short of a restoration of the full privileges of sonship.¹⁰⁰ However, even as these privileges of sonship were lost because mankind was in a representative union with Adam (who sinned, was condemned, and forfeited those privileges), so it is only possible for those blessings to be restored to believers as the one with whom they are united is granted such privileges.¹⁰¹ This is why Jesus’ appointment as son was necessary. As Jesus is raised from the dead and appointed as son, he is granted a sovereignty that extends over all. But his goal is not that he alone reigns as son but that he is “the firstborn among many brothers” (Rom 8:29). Jesus is the firstborn, but

Matthew 13-28, EBC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 594-95 (emphasis original); cf. France, *Matthew*, 1112-13.

¹⁰⁰That Paul connects the coming glory to restoration of the full privileges of sonship, see Keesmaat, *Paul and His Story*, 101-11; Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 139-45; Robin Scroggs, *The Last Adam: A Study in Pauline Anthropology* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1966), 96; Blomberg, “But We See Jesus,” 97; Adam’s, “Paul’s Story of God and Creation,” 29; Brendan Byrne, S. J., ‘*Sons of God*’ – ‘*Seed of Abraham*’: *A Study of the Idea of Sonship of God of All Christians in Paul against the Jewish Background* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1979), 104-05; Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, 121; Schenck, “Keeping His Appointment;” Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 170-71.

¹⁰¹That man’s restoration of sonship and vice-regency is only possible in being united to the one who has been appointed as Son, see Scott, *Adoption as Sons*, 254-63; Schweizer, “The Concept of the Davidic ‘Son of God,’” 191; Garner, “The First and Last Son,” 278-79; John Murray, “Adoption,” in *Collected Writings of John Murray*, vol. 2 (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 2001), 228; Kirk, *Unlocking Romans*, 134-41; idem, “Appointed Son(s),” 241; Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, 121; Schreiner, *Romans*, 39; Tipton, “Union with Christ,” 25-26; Ferguson, *The Holy Spirit*, 106.

he is raised and given universal sovereignty so that one day believers' sonship might be manifested as they are raised and reign alongside (and under) him.¹⁰² Thus, Mathews rightly notes,

From Genesis we have seen that the rule of mankind is not fully realized because of disobedience, which has meant the diminishing of that 'glory,' but Christ accomplished what sinful humanity could not achieve alone (Heb 2:9). The redeemed will share in Christ's "glory" as adopted heirs (Rom 8:17; 2 Thess 2:14; 1 Pet 5:1,4), for which humanity was intended before time (Rom 9:23; 1 Cor 2:7).¹⁰³

Hebrews 2:5-11 confirms this, noting that it is because Jesus is first "crowned with glory and honor" that he is able to bring "many sons to glory," not being "ashamed to call them brothers."¹⁰⁴ Therefore, if the goal of redemption is for believers to experience the full privileges of sonship, it is necessary for the one with whom they are united to have been appointed as son, and this is exactly what takes place through Jesus' resurrection.

The Adoption and Revealing God's Sons

Thus, the implications of Christ's appointment as son for believers via their union with Christ are obvious. Just as believers receive a legal sentence of justification in this life and that sentence is eschatologically demonstrated in their resurrection (as it was with Christ), so believers receive their adoption as sons in this life and their sonship is revealed in their resurrection.¹⁰⁵ That believers have already been adopted as sons is

¹⁰²So Scott, *Adoption as Son*, 248-55; Peterson, *Hebrews and Perfection*, 121; Blomberg, "But We See Jesus," 98.

¹⁰³Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26*, 172.

¹⁰⁴Horton (*Lord and Servant*, 107) rightly notes, "The sonship-likeness is seen most clearly, of course, in Jesus Christ, of whom Adam was himself a proleptic reflection. It is essential to recognize that in this sense the incarnate Lord of the covenant is its servant, and as the new Adam his royal sonship-likeness is not the same as his eternal Sonship. In his humiliation, he must attain this sonship-likeness—this royal image—on behalf of his brothers and sisters. This is how we must understand references such as Psalm 2:7 and 89:26, repeated in Hebrews 1:5."

clear from Romans 8:14-15, in which Paul writes, “For all who are led by the Spirit of God as sons of God . . . you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” Like justification, believers’ adoption as sons is a legal reality experienced in this life. However, (again like justification) it is a reality that will only be demonstrated fully when it is revealed in the resurrection. Thus, after noting that believers are already sons, Paul writes, “For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. . . . And not only the creation, but we ourselves . . . groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom 8:19, 22).

Therein, Paul reveals believers’ sonship as a present legal reality and as that which will be eschatologically demonstrated in their resurrection. He shows not only that the creation longs for the revealing of God’s sons but that this revealing takes place when believers’ bodies are redeemed. But why does creation long for the resurrection of individuals? What does the eschatological demonstration of such legal realities have to do with the cosmos? Paul declares that the creation longs for the resurrection of believers—the revealing of the sons of God—because when God’s sons are revealed, believers are conformed to Christ’s image, and their justification is manifested in glory; then the created order itself “will be free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom 8:21). Thus, the restoration of the cosmos is dependent on the manifestation of the justification of those who are sons of

¹⁰⁵As the NT speaks of believers legally becoming sons of God, it utilizes the imagery of adoption instead of appointment (e.g., Rom 8:23; Eph 1:5). This is perhaps why Gaffin, for example, speaks of Christ’s appointment as his adoption. However, it is most accurate to speak of Christ’s appointment as son in terms of appointment and simply to note that when this reality comes to those who are united with Christ by faith, it is expressed in the language of adoption.

Christ through faith in Christ.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the charge that penal substitution makes the resurrection unnecessary is unfounded. Rather, it is the fact that Christ dies under the condemnation of God that demands the resurrection. If believers are justified via their union with Christ, then they must be united with one who has himself been delivered from condemnation and declared righteous. This is what happens in Jesus' resurrection. Furthermore, just as Jesus' justification involved both a legal sentence and an eschatological demonstration of that sentence in resurrection, so believers receive the legal sentence of justification in this life and will also know the manifestation of that sentence in their resurrection. This is necessary both because it follows the pattern of Christ's justification and is demanded by the logic of Romans 5:12-21, wherein just as the sin of one led to a verdict of condemnation manifested in the reign of death, so the righteousness of one led to a sentence of justification manifested in a reign of life. Finally, just as believers' justification involves a legal sentence in the present and demonstration in the resurrection, so their adoption as sons is a present reality that awaits its manifestation at the resurrection. Because believers are united with one who was appointed as son of God by his resurrection, they too will be revealed as sons of God on that day when the full privileges of sonship are restored and the creation itself is set free from its bondage to decay (Rom 8:21).

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

What do individuals in the courtroom have to do with the transformation of the created order? This question sums up Joel Green's charge that penal substitution cannot account for God's purpose in restoring the created order, and it is that challenge that this study has attempted to address.¹ In the end, this study suggests that individuals in the courtroom have much to do with the redemption of the cosmos, for it is only when the justification of individuals is manifested in their resurrection that the created order will experience the freedom of the glory of the sons of God. Thus, an understanding of the atonement that focuses on individuals, forensic judgment, and the moment of justification is no obstacle to God's purpose of restoring creation but a necessary and foundational element in God's work of cosmic redemption. But arriving at this conclusion has required multiple steps.

Summary

The opening chapter showed the landscape of the debate before revealing the

¹Green writes, "The prevailing model of the atonement, focused as it is on the individual, on a forensic judgment, and on the moment of justification, is an obstacle to a thoroughgoing soteriology oriented toward holiness of life. That is, an exaggerated focus on an objective atonement and on salvation as transaction undermines any emphasis on salvation as transformation, and it obscures the . . . cosmological dimensions of salvation. If the purpose of God will be actualized in the restoration of all things, then how is this purpose served by a theory of penal substitutionary atonement?" Joel B. Green, "Must We Imagine the Atonement in Penal Substitutionary Terms? Questions, Caveats, and a Plea," in *The Atonement Debate: Papers from the London Symposium on the Theology of the Atonement*, ed. David Hilborn, Justin Thacker, and Derek Tidball (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 166.

challenge this study has sought to answer. That chapter also revealed the thesis of this study, namely, that penal substitution is necessary for the renewal of the creation because cosmic restoration is dependent upon the removal of condemnation from individuals and those same individuals receiving a verdict of justification, which is demonstrated in their resurrection.

Chapter 2 focused on diagnosing the problem with the created order. As noted there, unless there is agreement on the problem there is little hope that individuals will agree on a solution. This chapter revealed that the created order is held in bondage to the reign of death that is itself a manifestation of the condemnation that has come to all humanity in Adam. Therefore, if the creation is to be freed from the tyranny of death's reign, the sentence of condemnation underlying that reign must be removed from individuals.

Chapter 3 then noted a point of disagreement among numerous opponents and proponents of penal substitution concerning their doctrine of God and the manner in which he governs the world. This chapter showed that a number of opponents of penal substitution understand divine righteousness as merely God's covenant faithfulness while excluding any notion of retribution. Furthermore, they understand divine wrath as those consequences of human sin which come within God's ordered world and not an externally-imposed punishment from God on individuals. These two presuppositions exclude the need for penal substitution. Therefore, even if individuals believe that the diagnosis of chapter 2 is accurate, they will see no need for God to punish his Son in the place of sinners in order to uphold his divine justice and justify believers.

Addressing these definitional differences was, therefore, necessary before moving to the biblical description of how God removed the sentence of condemnation from individuals. A biblical and theological survey ultimately showed that righteousness includes the notion of retribution and that wrath includes externally-imposed punishment. Therefore, although justice includes covenant faithfulness and wrath is sometimes manifested in the consequences of human choices and actions (as well as God giving someone over to his or her sin), to limit these concepts to such understandings is reductionistic and unbiblical. This conclusion, then, highlighted the need for God to remove condemnation from individuals while upholding his justice in punishing the guilty for their sins. That is, this chapter revealed both the need and seeming impossibility of removing condemnation from individuals—that which underlies creation's plight.

Chapter 4 showed the sufficiency of penal substitution in achieving the end of God removing condemnation while upholding divine justice. This chapter noted once more that the elements required to address condemnation justly are the very elements that make up the concept of penal substitution. The claim of penal substitution is that the Father, in love, sent his Son so that he might take the place of sinners in bearing the penalty of divine wrath so that God might satisfy his justice and justify those who have faith in Christ. However, this chapter also noted that penal substitution is not simply logically sufficient but biblically supported. This was revealed through an examination of four texts: Romans 3:25-26; 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and Galatians 3:13. Each of these texts was ultimately shown to teach and affirm penal substitution. In this chapter,

then, came the affirmation that penal substitution is necessary for justly removing condemnation from individuals and is the teaching of Scripture.

Finally, chapter 5 addressed some remaining problems and brought the argument to its end. This chapter first showed the connection between penal substitution and the resurrection of Christ by arguing that penal substitution demands the resurrection. The reason for this is because individuals are united with Christ by faith so that what is true of him is true of them as well. Therefore, if Christ dies and is not raised, then they are united with one who is still under the condemnation of God in the grave. The resurrection of Christ, however, reveals his justification. And because Christ is justified through his resurrection, believers are justified by faith in the crucified and risen Lord. *He is raised for our justification* (Rom 4:25).

This chapter also revealed the connection between the legal and declarative act of justification and the resurrection of individuals by showing that the justification of individuals in this life necessarily leads to their resurrection. This piece in the argument addressed Green's proposed dichotomy between an atonement model that focused on a forensic judgment, the justification of individuals, and the transformation of the cosmos. The argument was shown in two ways. First, it was revealed through the argument of Romans 5:12-21. There, Paul argues that just as death is an inevitable manifestation of condemnation, so life is the inevitable manifestation of justification. Therefore, it is impossible for believers to be justified in this life and never experience the manifestation of that legal sentence in resurrection life. Second, it was shown through Christ's own resurrection. That is, if believers are united with Christ by faith so that what he does and receives is determinative for them, then just as Christ received a legal sentence of

justification that was manifested in his resurrection to life so believers will receive the same. Thus, the justification of believers involves both a “judicial declaration” in this life and an “eschatological demonstration” of that sentence in their resurrection.²

This chapter then concluded by showing why the resurrection of individuals brings about the redemption of creation. This answer, too, was tied to a legal reality that transpired in Christ’s resurrection, namely, his appointment as “son of God.” And because Christ was appointed “son of God” via his resurrection, so the resurrection of believers will reveal their sonship and the restoration of the full privileges thereof so that the created order itself will then be free to enjoy the glory that it once knew under the reign of God’s son, Adam, and will know again under the reign of all of God’s sons, believers.

An Area of Further Study

This study has revealed the foundational importance of penal substitution in God’s purpose in restoring the created order. Along the way, it has been noted that most proponents of penal substitution do not think it merely as one model of Christ’s atoning work but as the foundation and heart of the atonement. It is perhaps this affirmation that has led Travis and Green, for example, to speak against those who might think the atonement is “exclusively” a work of penal substitution or ignore that there are other facets to Christ’s atoning work.³ The audience to whom Green and Travis address such a

²As noted previously, these terms have been taken from Lane G. Tipton, “Union with Christ and Justification,” in *Justified in Christ: God’s Plan for Us in Justification*, ed. K. Scott Oliphant (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus, 2007), 30.

³See Stephen H. Travis, *Christ and the Judgement of God: The Limits of Divine Retribution in New Testament Thought* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008), 186, 199. Again, Green speaks even more strongly, writing, “Paul uses an almost inexhaustible series of metaphors to represent the significance of

correction, however, is unclear, for none of the prominent defenders of penal substitution has dismissed the truth that there are multiple facets to Christ's atoning work. None of them has held that the atonement is exclusively an act of penal substitution.

That this attack continues to be heralded, however, highlights the need for response. One such response should come in the form of an argument illustrating how penal substitution is necessary for all the other facets of Christ's atoning work. That is, it needs to be shown exactly how penal substitution lies at the center of Christ's atoning work and produces the other effects of the cross. Such a task would need to include a biblical examination of texts and theological argumentation to show the connection between penal substitution and other biblical facets of the atonement while also revealing why these other aspects could not exist were it not for Christ paying the penalty for sinners as their substitute.

Conclusion

“We treasure tradition not by servile adherence to it, but by, as it were, sitting on the shoulders of fathers and elder brothers who were giants indeed, and thus do we hope to be granted the grace of seeing even further and ever more clearly.”⁴ So began Henri Blocher in his work on original sin. It reflects Blocher's appreciation of those who have studied before him, a realization of his dependence on them, and an understanding that one should be humbled to get to add a small piece to the argument that has been

Jesus' death, and penal substitution (at least as popularly defined) is not one of them.” John T. Carroll and Joel B. Green, *The Death of Jesus in Early Christianity* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995), 263.

⁴Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle*, NSBT, vol. 5 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 13.

forged through the writings of these precious saints. It is in hopes of mirroring this sentiment that this study has been written. Amid the attacks against penal substitution and the myriad of answers to those charges, this study will certainly not be the final word in defending this precious doctrine. Nor should it be, since each arising challenge against penal substitution needs to be answered. May the Lord grant the grace, however, to allow this study to serve as an answer for one challenge to this central tenant of the Christian faith.

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ABSTRACT

THE COURTROOM AND THE CREATED ORDER: HOW PENAL SUBSTITUTION BRINGS ABOUT NEW CREATION

Lee Daniel Tankersley, Ph.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010
Chair: Dr. Stephen J. Wellum

This dissertation argues that penal substitutionary atonement is necessary for transformation of the created order. This assertion answers the charge that an atonement model that deals with forensic judgments, the moment of justification, and a focus on the individual serves as an obstacle to God's purpose of restoring even the created order itself.

Chapter 1 examines the current setting of the debate, illustrating the need for this charge to be answered. This chapter also lays out the thesis as well as the methodology of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 asks the question, "What is wrong with the created order?" This chapter demonstrates that the plight of creation is that it is held in bondage to a reign of death which is itself a manifestation of the legal verdict of condemnation that has come to individuals in Adam.

Chapter 3 demonstrates that the reason numerous evangelicals deny penal substitution is because of a faulty understanding of the nature of God. This chapter argues that God's righteousness is broader than covenant faithfulness, that it includes an

element of retribution, that it is intrinsic to God, and that God's wrath includes his personal inflicting of punishment upon the sinner. After examining God's nature, this chapter ends by noting the necessity and difficulty of removing condemnation from individuals.

Chapter 4 illustrates how penal substitutionary atonement accounts for the removal of condemnation from individuals in a manner that is in accord with God's righteousness. This chapter also shows the biblical support for penal substitution through an examination of Romans 3:25-26; 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and Galatians 3:13.

Chapter 5 demonstrates that far from making the resurrection of Christ unnecessary, penal substitution demands the resurrection because Christ dies as the condemned one on behalf of sinners. The reason the resurrection is necessary, then, is because it serves as and manifests Christ's justification. Furthermore, because Christ's resurrection serves as his legal justification and appointment as son as well as an eschatological demonstration of these legal realities, so believers legal verdict of justification and adoption as sons necessitates a demonstration of these realities in their resurrection, wherein they will be revealed as God's sons. At this time, the created order will be restored.

Chapter 6 summarizes the argument of the first five chapters, notes an area of possibility for further study, and provides a brief note of conclusion. This chapter concludes that far from obscuring God's cosmological purposes, penal substitution is required for the redemption of the created order.

VITA

Lee Daniel Tankersley

PERSONAL

Born: July 21, 1978, Paducah, Kentucky

Parents: James (Dan) and Judy Tankersley

Married: Lillian Ann Myatt, June 3, 2000

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Reidland High School, Paducah, Kentucky

B.A., Union University, 2000

M.Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2004

MINISTERIAL

Pastor, Cornerstone Community Church, Jackson Tennessee, 1999-

ORGANIZATIONAL

Evangelical Theological Society