

The penal substitutionary atonement theory

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The penal substitutionary atonement theory was formulated in the 16th century as an extension of Anselm's satisfaction Theory (Stott 114). God is viewed as holy and perfect and as a person who has established high standards for perfection for humanity. The reformers saw it insufficient due to the fact that it was referenced to God's honor as opposed to his holiness and justice. The reformers believed that Christ died for man as he took his sins and bore them for him. Through the bearing of man's sins, Christ is believed to take the punishment from them and deliver the believers free from the demands of the law. This is a clear indication that the holiness of God and the righteousness of the law are satisfied by his substitution. There are relevant scriptures including Isaiah 53: 12 " yet he bore sins of many, and mistakes intercession for the transgressors." And Isaiah 53: 6 " the Lord has laid equality of us all." The Penal substitution theory assumes that God is infinite, minor human sins are an infinite debt to him. This can only be canceled through infinite satisfaction through the death of Jesus Christ. The belief that God's need to seek justice is so strong that he would only demand satisfaction through the death of an innocent person is an assumption that modern readers would reject.

With reference to John Scott's classic work " The cross of Christ", he tries to offer a deeper understanding of satisfaction with his fifth chapter " satisfaction for sin". He argues that the cross was necessary due to the fact that God had to satisfy himself in the way of salvation. Scott uses this chapter to analyze that the death of Jesus Christ on the cross was necessary for satisfaction. This is a statement that most people affirm to. However, the nature of satisfaction has been a subject of debate throughout the history of the church. He looks at different methods to which the theologians believe as <https://assignbuster.com/the-penal-substitutionary-atonement-theory/>

the method God used to forgive the sins of mankind (Stott 120). Other speak of satisfying God's law, justice and honor, some speak of overthrowing the devil while others speak of satisfying the moral order of the world.

However, there are some limitations that hold with these theological concepts. He tries to emphasize that God's self-consistency claiming that there is nothing outside this that he demands satisfaction. God must judge sinners in order to maintain true to himself. The bible clearly depicts this through the language of provocation, burning that of satisfaction itself. John asserts that "when God acts through the sake of his name, he is not merely protecting it from misinterpretation but determining it as true" (Stott 127). The only way God chooses to forgive sinners is through reconciling them to himself first and being fully consistent with his own character.