

Text: various

Today is our Communion Sunday. Lately one of the things I've been doing for Communion is reading up on an atonement related topic in a theology book and using that as my starter idea. This month I am in Millard Erickson's *Christian Theology*.

For today, I ran across a little section that outlined what Jesus thought or said about the atonement ahead of time. I think you will find it very interesting. To start, here is some Erickson:

"Although Jesus did not have a great deal to say about this death during the first part of his ministry, toward the end he began to speak about it quite explicitly and clearly. These teachings were not elicited by chance questions from Jesus' disciples or challenges by his enemies, but were delivered purposely, at his own initiative."¹

As we look at various passages, I think you will find all the more reason to love our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. Christ's mission

A. Sent by the father into the world (Jn 10.36)

Jn 10.36 do you say of Him, whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God' ?

B. Sent to do the father's will (Jn 6.38)

Jn 6.38 "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

C. Sent to save the world (Jn 3.17)

Jn 3.17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.

¹ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1998), 823.

II. Christ's conviction

A. Jesus linked his death with Isaiah 53 (Lk 22.37, cp. Isa 53.12)

Lk 22.37 "For I tell you that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment."

Isa 53.12 Therefore, I will allot Him a portion with the great, And He will divide the booty with the strong; Because He poured out Himself to death, And was numbered with the transgressors; Yet He Himself bore the sin of many, And interceded for the transgressors.

B. Jesus saw his death as the reason he came (Mk 8.31, Mt 17.12)

Mk 8.31 ¶ And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

Mt 17.12 but I say to you that Elijah already came, and they did not recognize him, but did to him whatever they wished. So also the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands."

C. Jesus saw his death as a ransom (Mt 20.28, Mk 10.45)

Mt 20.28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Mk 10.45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

"The word λύτρον (*lutron*—'ransom') with its cognates is used nearly 140 times in the Septuagint, usually with the thought of deliverance from some sort of bondage in exchange for the payment of compensation or the offering of a substitute."²

² Erickson, 824.

D. Jesus saw himself as our substitute (Jn 15.13)

Jn 15.13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.

E. Jesus saw himself as a sacrifice for sins (Jn 17.19)

Jn 17.19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

"The verb here is ἀγιάζω (*hagiazō*), a term common in sacrificial contexts. C. K. Barrett says, 'The language is equally appropriate to the preparation of a priest and the preparation of a sacrifice; it is therefore doubly appropriate to Christ.'"³

F. Jesus knew that his death would provide life for the world, especially for those who believed (Jn 6.51, cf. 52-58)

Jn 6.51 "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."

Conclusion:

Our Lord Jesus made his purpose clear. In another passage from Isaiah, we hear the determined Messiah speaking of his purpose:

Isa 50.7 For the Lord GOD helps Me, Therefore, I am not disgraced; Therefore, I have set My face like flint, And I know that I will not be ashamed.

Praise the Lord that he came and did what he set out to do!

³ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), p. 571, quoted in Erickson, *Christian Theology*.