

## Penal Substitution in Church History

**Clement of Rome:** "Because of the love he had for us, Jesus Christ our Lord, in accordance with God's will, gave his blood for us, and his flesh for our flesh, and his life for our life."

**The Epistle to Diognetus (130 A.D.):** "When our unrighteousness was fulfilled, and it had been made perfectly clear that its wages—punishment and death—were to be expected, then the season arrived during which God had decided to reveal at last His goodness and power. O, the surpassing kindness and love of God! He did not hate us, or reject us, or bear a grudge against us; instead He was patient and forbearing. In His mercy He took upon Himself our sins. He Himself gave up His own Son as a ransom for us, the holy one for the lawless, the guiltless for the guilty, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal. For what else but His righteousness could have covered our sins? In whom was it possible for us, the lawless and ungodly, to be justified, except in the Son of God alone? O the sweet exchange, O the incomprehensible work of God, O the unexpected blessings, that the sinfulness of many should be hidden in one righteous person, while the righteousness of One should justify many sinners!"

**Justin Martyr:** "If, then, the Father of all wished His Christ for the whole human family to take upon Him the curses of all, knowing that, after He had been crucified and was dead, He would raise Him up, why do you argue about Him, who submitted to suffer these things according to the Father's will, as if He were accursed, and do not rather bewail yourselves?"

**Eusebius of Caesarea:** "And the Lamb of God...was chastised on our behalf, and suffered a penalty He did not owe, but which we owed because of the multitude of our sins; and so He became the cause of the forgiveness of our sins, because He received death for us, and transferred to Himself the scourging, the insults, and the dishonor, which were due us, and drew down on Himself the apportioned curse, being made a curse for us."

**Athanasius:** "Formerly the world, as guilty, was under judgment from the Law; but now the Word has taken on Himself the judgment, and having suffered in the body for all, has bestowed salvation to all."

**Athanasius:** "The Word perceived that corruption could not be got rid of otherwise than through death; yet He Himself, as the Word, being immortal and the Father's Son, was such as could not die. For this reason, therefore, He assumed a body capable of death, in order that it, through belonging to the Word Who is above all, might become in dying a sufficient exchange for all, and, itself remaining incorruptible through His indwelling, might thereafter put an end to corruption for all others as well, by the grace of the resurrection. It was by surrendering to death the body, which He had taken, as an offering and sacrifice free from every stain, that He forthwith abolished death for His human brethren by the offering of the equivalent. For naturally, since the Word of God was above all, when He offered His own temple and bodily instrument as a substitute for the life of all, He fulfilled in death all that was required."

**Gregory of Nazianzus:** "As for my sake He was called a curse, Who destroyed my curse; and sin, who taketh away the sin of the world; and became a new Adam to take the place of the old, just so He makes my disobedience His own as Head of the whole body. As long then as I am disobedient and rebellious, both by denial of God and by my passions, so long Christ also is called disobedient on my account."

**Augustine of Hippo:** "But as Christ endured death as a man, and for man, so also, Son of God as He was, ever living in His own righteousness, but dying for our offences, submitted as man, and for man, to bear the curse which accompanies death. And as he died in the flesh which he took in bearing our punishment, so also, while ever blessed in his own righteousness, he was cursed for our offences, in the death which he suffered in bearing our punishment." and "Christ, though guiltless, took our punishment, that he might cancel our guilt, and do away with our punishment."

**Gelasius:** "For the punishment of the cross was due to us; but if we had all been crucified, we would have had no power to deliver ourselves from death, 'for death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who did not sin' (Rom. 5:14). There were many holy men, many prophets, many righteous men, but not one of them had the power to ransom himself from the authority of death; but he, the Saviour of all, came and received the punishments which were due to us into his sinless flesh, which was of us, in place of us, and on our behalf."

**Thomas Aquinas:** "It is wicked and cruel to hand an innocent man over to suffering and death if it is against his will. Nor did God the Father so treat Christ in whom He inspired the will to suffer for us. God's severity is thus manifested; he was unwilling to remit sin without punishment, as the Apostle intimates when he says, 'He did not

spare even His own Son.' But it also illustrates God's goodness, for as man was unable to make sufficient satisfaction through any punishment he himself might suffer, God gave him One who would satisfy for him. Paul stresses this, saying, 'He has delivered Him up for us all', and, 'God has established him [Christ] as a propitiation by His blood through faith.'"

**Martin Luther:** "Because an eternal, unchangeable sentence of condemnation has passed upon sin - for God cannot and will not regard sin with favor, but His wrath abides upon it eternally and irrevocably - redemption was not possible without a ransom of such precious worth as to atone for sin, to assume the guilt, pay the price of wrath and thus abolish sin. This no creature was able to do. There was no remedy except for God's only Son to step into our distress and himself become man, to take upon Himself the load of awful and eternal wrath and make His own body and blood a sacrifice for sin. And so He did, out of the immeasurably great mercy and love towards us, giving Himself up and bearing the sentence of unending wrath and death."

**John Calvin:** "On the other hand, suppose he learns, as Scripture teaches, that he was estranged from God through sin, in an heir of wrath, subject to the curse of eternal death, excluded from all hope of salvation, beyond every blessings of God, the slave of Satan, captive under the yoke of sin, destined finally for a dreadful destruction and already involved in it; and that at this point Christ interceded as his advocate, took upon himself and suffered the punishment that, from God's righteous judgment, threatened all sinners; that he purged with his blood those evils which had rendered sinners hateful to God; that by this expiation he made satisfaction and sacrifice duly to God the Father; that as intercessor he has appeased God's wrath; that on this foundation rests the peace of God with men; that by this bond his benevolence is maintained toward them. Will the man not then be even more moved by all these things which so vividly portray the greatness of the calamity from which he has been rescued?"

**John Bunyan:** From the conversation in Pilgrim's Progress where Hopeful is recounting his conversion experience to Christian, "Yes, and he told me it was the Lord Jesus, that dwelleth on the right hand of the Most High. And thus, said he, you must be made right by Him, even by trusting what He hath done by Himself in the days of His flesh, and suffered when He did hang on the tree. I asked him further, How that Man's righteousness could be of that power to help another before God? And he told me He was the mighty God, and did what He did, and died the death also, not for Himself, but for me; to whom His doings, and the worthiness of them, should be given if I believed on Him."

**John Owen, *The Death of Death*:** "Christ so took and bare our sins, and had them so laid upon him, as that he underwent the punishment due unto them, and that in our stead: therefore, he made satisfaction to the justice of God for them."

**Francis Turretin:** "The question concerns a penal satisfaction properly so called by which he not only fulfilled the will of God, but also his justice (Christ having taken upon himself our sins). This the Socinians deny; we affirm. Second...the question concerns a true and proper satisfaction made by the payment of a full price and which meritoriously obtains the liberation of the guilty on the ground of justice. This we preach from the word of God... Third...the question is whether he [Christ] died for us substitutively (i.e., in our place, that by being substituted in our place, he suffered the punishment due to us). We affirm that he did."

**George Whitefield:** "Here then opens the amazing scene of Divine Philanthropy; I mean, God's love to man. For behold, what man could not do, Jesus Christ, the son of his Father's love, undertakes to do for him...he obeyed, and thereby fulfilled the whole moral law in our stead; and also died a painful death upon the cross, and thereby became a curse for, or instead of, those whom the Father had given to him."

**Charles Spurgeon:** "God cannot look where there is sin with any pleasure, and though as far as Jesus is personally concerned, he is the Father's beloved Son in whom he is well pleased; yet when he saw sin laid upon his Son, he made that Son cry, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" It was not possible that Jesus should enjoy the light of his Father's presence while he was made sin for us; consequently he went through a horror of great darkness, the root and source of which was the withdrawing of the conscious enjoyment of his Father's presence. More than that, not only was light withdrawn, but positive sorrow was inflicted. God must punish sin, and though the sin was not Christ's by his actually doing it, yet it was laid upon him, and therefore he was made a curse for us."

**Martyn Lloyd-Jones:** "*This is a statement to the effect that God's wrath has been appeased and that God has been placated as the result of the work which our Lord did there by dying on the Cross.*" and "*That means that not only have the sins been laid upon him, but that the wrath of God has been poured out upon him. The punishment that should have come to you and to me on account of our sinfulness and our sins came to him.*"