

Medical Substitutionary Atonement, Personal Healing, and Social Justice

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WORKSHOP



Honor-Shame
CONFERENCE

A hand in a dark sleeve is pulling back a heavy red curtain. Behind the curtain, a bright, glowing light source is visible, creating a dramatic and hopeful atmosphere. The text is overlaid on this scene.

SHAME

& *Glory*

How Jesus Heals Your Self, Desires, and Emotions

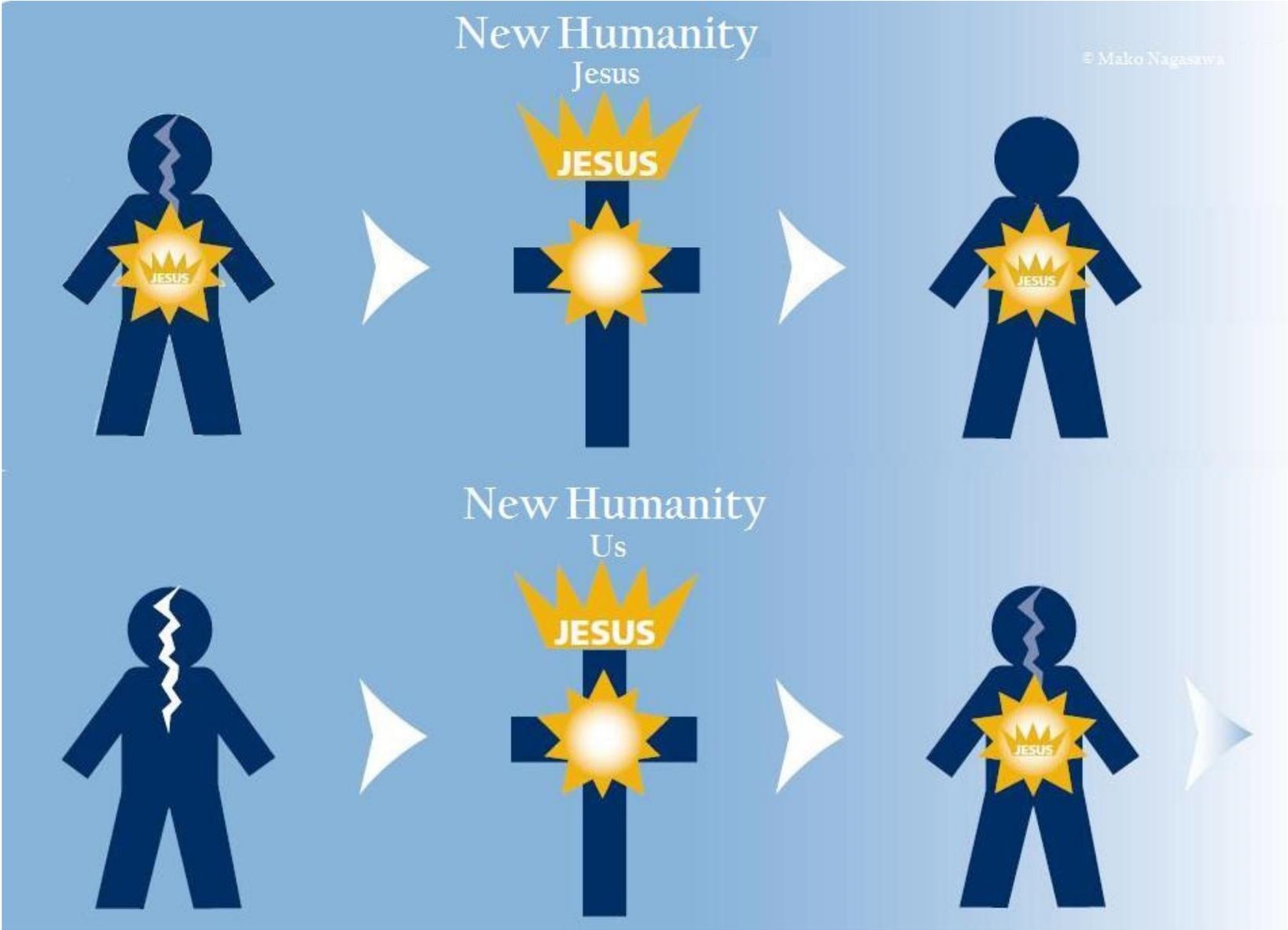
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What is Medical Substitution?

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- Gospel Diagram



Three Problems Jesus Solves

- God (Exile / Divine Fire / Sinai covenant)
- Satan
- Human Evil

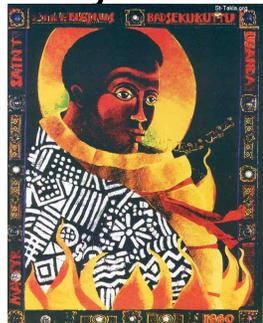
Medical Substitution

- “Man, who had sin in himself... was liable to death. [So] it behooved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that **He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man**; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so **that sin should be destroyed by man**, and man should go forth from death... Thus, then, was the Word of God made man... God recapitulated in Himself the ancient formation of man, **that He might kill sin**, deprive death of its power, and vivify man; and therefore His works are true.”
- Irenaeus of Lyons (130 – 202), *Against Heresies* 3.18.7



Medical Substitution

- “Had it been a case of a trespass only, and not of a subsequent corruption, repentance would have been well enough; but when once transgression had begun men came under the power of the corruption proper to their nature and were bereft of the grace which belonged to them as creatures in the Image of God. No, repentance could not meet the case... Thus, taking a body like our own... This He did that He might turn again to incorruption men who had turned to corruption, and make them alive through death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of His resurrection. Thus He would make death to disappear from them as utterly as straw from fire.”
- Athanasius of Alexandria (298 – 373), *On the Incarnation* 2.8 – 9



God, Exile, and Fire: Restorative, Not Retributive, Justice

- ‘Wherefore also He drove him out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life, not because He envied him the tree of life, as some venture to assert, but because He pitied him, [and did not desire] that he should continue a sinner for ever, nor that the sin which surrounded him should be immortal, and evil interminable and irremediable. **But He set a bound to his [state of] sin, by interposing death, and thus causing sin to cease, putting an end to it by the dissolution of the flesh, which should take place in the earth, so that man, ceasing at length to live to sin, and dying to it, might begin to live to God.**’
- Irenaeus of Lyons (130 – 202), *Against Heresies* 3.23.6

God, **Exile**, and Fire: Restorative, Not Retributive, Justice

- ‘**In order, then, that man might not be an undying or ever-living evil**, as would have been the case if sin were dominant within him, as it had sprung up in an immortal body, and was provided with immortal sustenance, God for this cause pronounced him mortal, and clothed him with mortality... For while the body still lives, before it has passed through death, sin must also live with it, as it has its roots concealed within us even though it be externally checked by the wounds inflicted by corrections and warnings... For the present we restrain its sprouts, such as evil imaginations, test any root of bitterness springing up trouble us, not suffering its leaves to uncloset and open into shoots; while the Word, like an axe, cuts at its roots which grow below. But hereafter the very thought of evil will disappear.’
- Methodius of Olympus (d.311), *From the Discourse on the Resurrection* 1.4 – 5

God, Exile, and Fire: Restorative, Not Retributive, Justice

- ‘Yet here too he makes a gain, namely death and **the cutting off of sin, in order that evil may not be immortal**. Thus, his punishment is changed into a mercy, for it is in mercy, I am persuaded, that God inflicts punishment.
- Gregory of Nazianzus (329 – 390), *Oration 45*

God, Exile, and Fire: Restorative, Not Retributive, Justice

- “God stationed... the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life” (Gen.3:24)
- “His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire. His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace... In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.”
(Rev.1:14 – 16)

God, Exile, and Fire: Restorative, Not Retributive, Justice

- God in the burning bush on Mt. Sinai (Ex.3)
- God in the pillar of fire and cloud (Ex.13 – 14)
- God in the fire on Mt. Sinai (Ex.19); Moses' face shone (Ex.34)
- God's fire as purifying (e.g. Mal.3:1 – 3; Isa.1:25 – 31; 4:3 – 5; 6:1 – 13; 10:16 – 17) but feels destroying if resisted (e.g. Mal.4:1 – 3; Isa.5:24; 30:27; 66:13 – 24)

God, Exile, and Fire: Restorative, Not Retributive, Justice

- God in the Spirit (“Spirit and fire”) anointed Jesus (Mt.3:12 – 17)
- God transfigured Jesus, like Moses’ shining face (Mt.17:1 – 13)
- “...most people’s love will grow cold” (Mt.24:12)
- God resurrected Jesus using motifs of light (Mt.28; Lk.24)
- God anointed the disciples with the Spirit and fire at Pentecost (Acts 2:1 – 13)

God, Exile, and Fire: Restorative, Not Retributive, Justice

- We have “become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Pet.1:4)
- We have “purification from our former sins” (2 Pet.1:9)
- Jesus was refined by divine light/fire (2 Pet.1:16 – 19)
- We are being purified from our corruption (2 Pet.2)
- All things will be refined by fire (2 Pet.3:10 – 18)

God, Exile, and Fire: Restorative, Not Retributive, Justice

- “The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire” (Rev.2:18)
- “I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire” (Rev.3:18)
- “he will be tormented with fire... in the presence of the Lamb” (Rev.14:10)
- “having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper...the city was pure gold, like clear glass...And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.” (Rev.21:11, 18, 21)

Sinai Covenant: A Medical and Surgical Purpose

- Circumcision = restoration of creation ideal (Gen.12 – 17)
- “Circumcise your hearts” (Dt.10:16) by internalizing the word of God
- “The Lord will circumcise your hearts” (Dt.30:6) on the other side of the exile
- “Create for me a clean heart” (Ps.51:9)
- “The Lord will write His Law on your hearts” (Jer.31:31 – 34) or “circumcise your hearts” (Jer.4:4; 17:1 – 10)
- The Lord will give you hearts of flesh instead of hearts of stone (Ezk.36:26)

Sinai Covenant, Jesus as the Faithful Israel

- “For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh [of Israel], God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” (Romans 8:3 – 4)
 - “In the likeness of man” (Philippians 2:7) = real man; real participation in
 - “In the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3) = real sinful flesh
 - “According to Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26) = real participation in God

Sinai Covenant, Jesus as the Faithful Israel

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- God was never Israel’s “adversary” (Jewish restorative covenant vs. Western/Latin adversarial law)
- Analogy: Doctor’s health regimen; Israel as partner and patient
- God did not use Israel as a whipping post or a foil, to demonstrate “retribution”

Sinai Covenant, Jesus as the Faithful Israel

- What we “owe” God: human nature restored in partnership with God
- Circumcision of the heart is the real goal of the Sinai covenant (Romans 2:28 – 29)
- “Circumcision of Christ” (Colossians 2:12)
- “our old self was crucified with him” (Romans 6:6)

Sinai Covenant, Jesus as the Faithful Israel

- *Active* obedience of Jesus (*pistis christou*):
 - “the righteousness of God through *the faithfulness* of Jesus Christ” (Romans 3:22, KJV)
 - “I live by *the faithfulness* of the Son of God” (Galatians 2:20, KJV)
 - “Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith” (Hebrews 12:1 – 2)

Impact

- ‘This emphasis on Jesus as God’s new humanity has made him so much more relatable... I never really understood how Jesus undid all the sins and evil within the nature of human beings. In many ways, Jesus’ death had made me feel guilty, because I found that I was so unworthy to have Jesus suffer on behalf of my sins. However, understanding how Jesus conquered sin through healing humanity during his life and finally conquering the greatest evil of death, I now see his act on the cross as a moment of triumph.’
- Danielle, student

Who Else Holds to This?

- Early Church
- Eastern Orthodox Church
- Roman Catholics (J.R.R. Tolkien, etc.)
- C.S. Lewis (Anglican)
- Roberta Bondi (Methodist)
- Karl Barth, T.F. Torrance (Reformed)

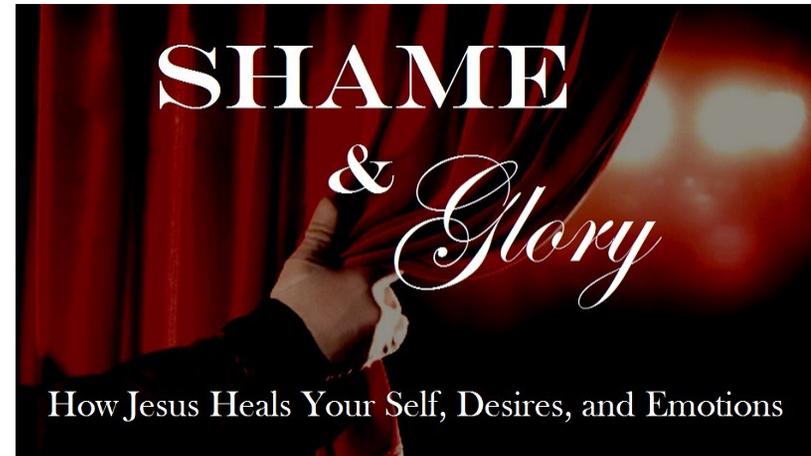
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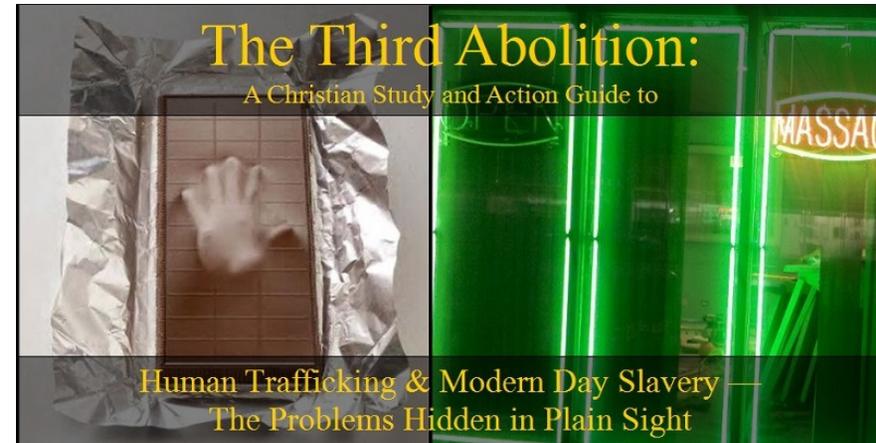


- Discipleship & Evangelism
 - The “true self” as still in God’s image, despite sin
 - Our human emotions can be a window into God’s emotions
 - Trauma-informed connection to early Christian monasticism and modern neuroscience
 - Jesus as healer of human nature and human desires, emotions

Restoring the Captives

A Christian Study and Action Guide to
Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*

- Social Justice & Evangelism
 - Restorative justice vs. retributive justice; basis for
 - Facts about mass incarceration, private prisons, criminal law
 - Biblical passages compared with other viewpoints
 - Suggested action steps, e.g. write your Congressperson



- Social Justice & Evangelism
 - Restorative justice vs. retributive justice; basis for
 - Facts about sex and labor trafficking
 - Biblical passages compared with other viewpoints
 - Suggested action steps, e.g. policy and personal

- Social Justice & Evangelism
 - Restorative justice with land and our future children
 - Facts about food and environment
 - Biblical passages compared with other viewpoints
 - Suggested action steps, e.g. policy and personal



Out of Eden
A Christian Study and Action Guide to
Food and the Environment

