The background is a composite image. On the left, the lower portion of the Colosseum is visible, showing its iconic tiered arches. On the right, a large, detailed marble bust of a man with curly hair is shown in profile. The upper half of the image features a textured, parchment-like background with a faint map of ancient Rome. The map includes labels for various regions: Dacia, Mistia, Thracia, Macedonia, and others. The title text is overlaid on this map section.

ROME & THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY

Part 9: Introduction

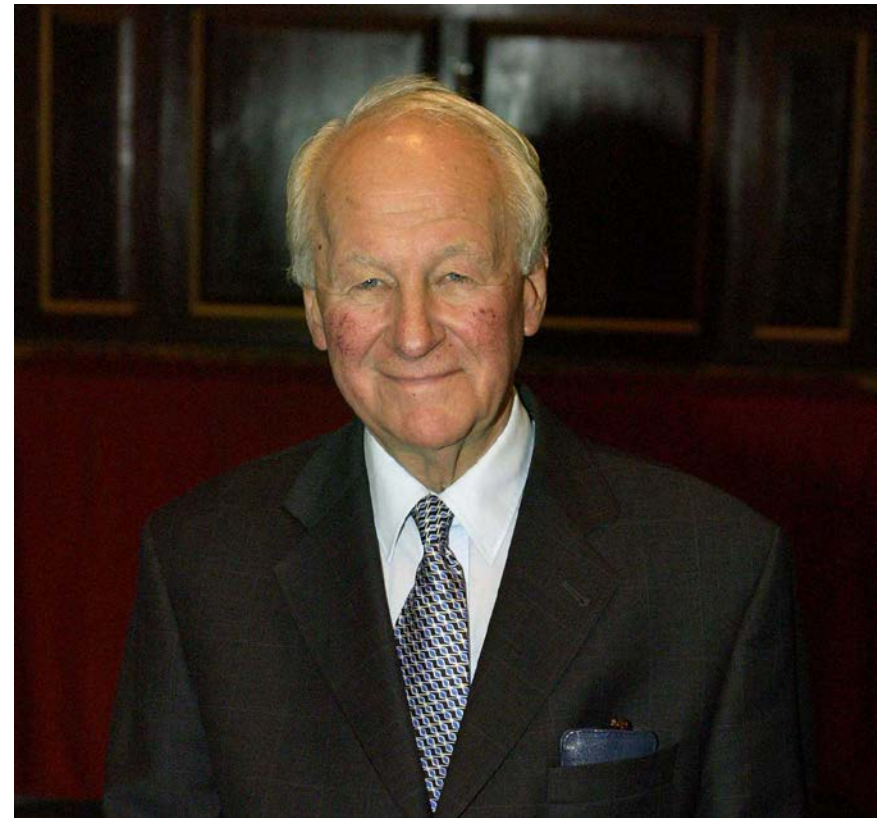
As was typical in Roman crucifixions, four soldiers fastened Jesus' hands and feet to a wooden cross with spikes and suspended Him between heaven and earth for six hours as He suffered unfathomable physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual anguish. "He saved others," the chief priests mocked. "He cannot save Himself. He is the King of Israel; let Him now come down from the cross, and we shall believe in Him" (Mt. 27:42). Jesus' refusal to accommodate their mocking appeal seems to be, on the surface of it, an indictment of His claims to deity and a repudiation of His almighty power. The Roman spikes perform their designed function with perfection, pinning Him firmly to the cross as the death throes slowly approach.

Introduction

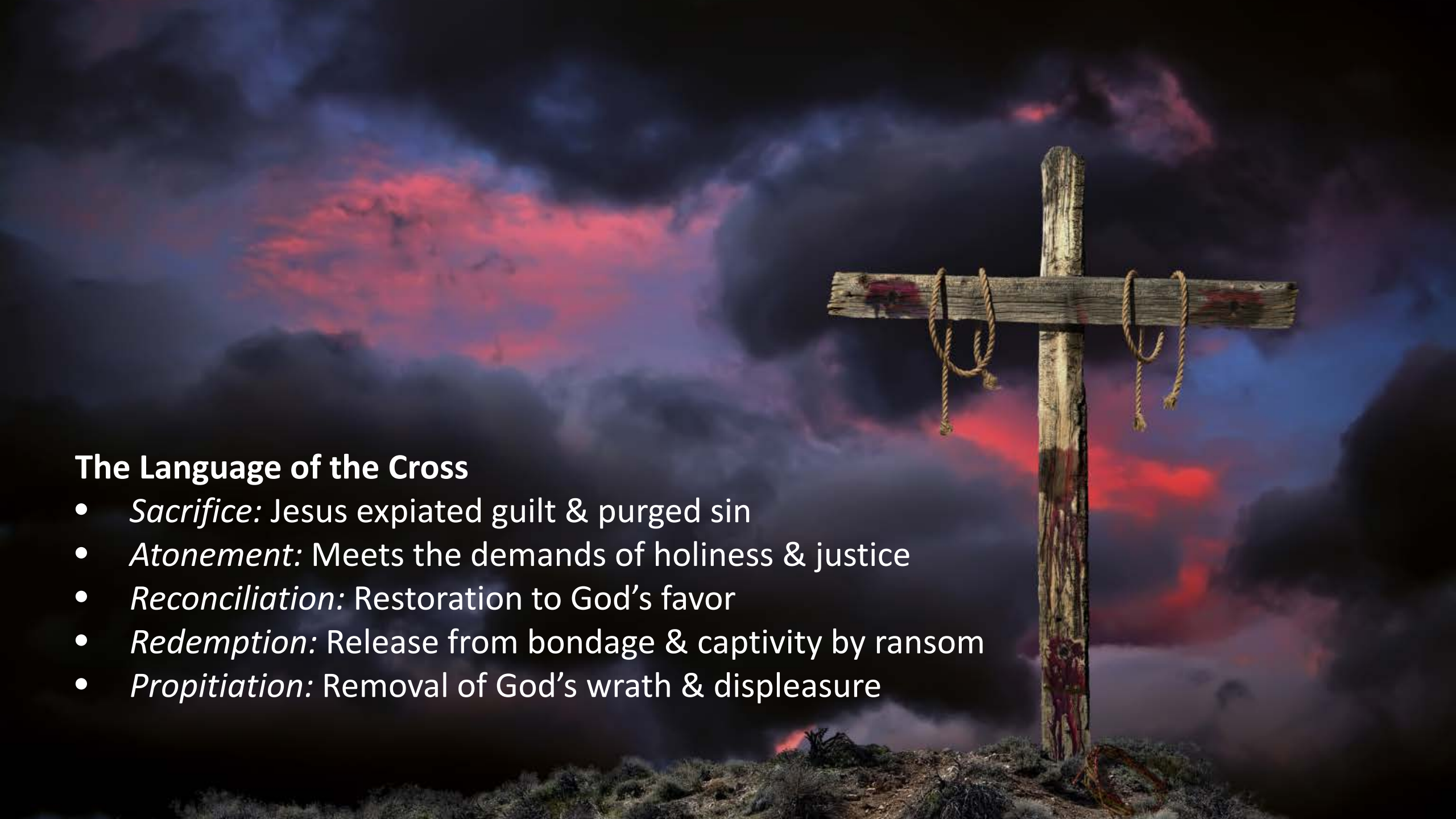
The narrative of those whose eyes are only capable of seeing a material world includes a scourged man in His thirties who is incapable of saving Himself from the inescapable competence of well-trained Roman soldiers. But for those who have looked for, and listened to, God's own explanation of His Son's death, the metanarrative of his crucifixion and death exposes the perverse judgments and obstinate opinions of mere human reason which is incapable of grasping ultimate or transcendent realities. The deeper – the really real - story of Jesus' death is that He died for our sins. Some sixty years after His agonizing ordeal, the Apostle John wrote: "We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us" (1 Jn. 3:16). It was love – not spikes – that held Him there.

God's Metanarrative

“Moved by the perfection of his holy love, God in Christ substituted himself for us sinners. That is the heart of the cross of Christ. It leads us to turn now from the event to its consequences, from what happened on the cross to what was achieved by it. Why did God take our place and bear our sin?”



John R.W. Stott
1921-2011



The Language of the Cross

- *Sacrifice*: Jesus expiated guilt & purged sin
- *Atonement*: Meets the demands of holiness & justice
- *Reconciliation*: Restoration to God's favor
- *Redemption*: Release from bondage & captivity by ransom
- *Propitiation*: Removal of God's wrath & displeasure

Redemption

- Ransom presupposes some kind of bondage or captivity.
- Redemption consisted in our Lord's shedding His blood as our substitute for the purpose of purchasing for Himself those for whom He gave His life as a ransom.
- We are not redeemed from the law, but from the **curse** of the law (Gal. 3:13).
- We are redeemed from the **ceremonial law** of the Old Testament.
- We are redeemed from the **necessity of keeping the law as a condition of our justification**.
- We are redeemed from the **guilt and power of sin**.

Redemption

- “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which **He purchased with His own blood**” (Acts 20:28).
- “...being justified as a gift by His grace through **the redemption which is in Christ Jesus**” (Rom. 3:24).
- “In Him we have **redemption through His blood...**” (Eph. 1:7a).
- “For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, **in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins**” (Col. 1:13-14).
- “For you have been **bought with a price**; therefore glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:20).

Redemption

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

- Mark 10:45



Propitiation

- Propitiate means to “placate, pacify, appease, conciliate, cover.” We have an English word, *ilastical*, which means propitiatory or expiatory.
- Propitiation is the action in which God is propitiated and sin expiated or covered.
- The effect of this covering is forgiveness and cleansing.
- Both the covering and the effects take place before the Lord.
- Vengeance is the reaction of the holiness of God to sin and propitiation is the removal of this displeasure.

Propitiation

- The Greek word is used four times in Scripture. “And He Himself is the **propitiation** for our sins...” (I John 2:2). “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins” (I John 4:10).
- The verbal form is found in Hebrews 2:17 – “Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make **propitiation** for the sins of the people.”
- “...the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a **propitiation** in His blood through faith” (Rom. 3:24-25).

R.C. Sproul

“Orthodox Christianity has insisted that the Atonement involves *substitution* and *satisfaction*. In taking on God’s curse upon Himself, Jesus satisfied the demands of God’s holy justice. He received God’s wrath for us, saving us from the wrath that is to come (I Thessalonians 1:10).”



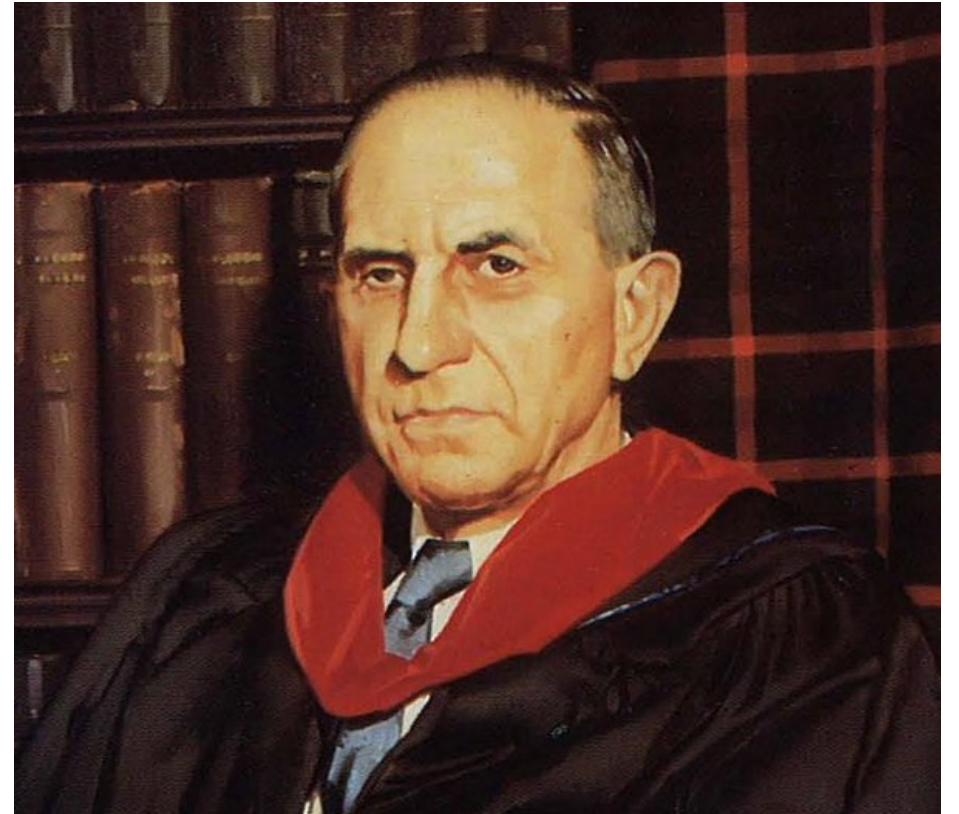
Westminster Confession of Faith

“The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him.”



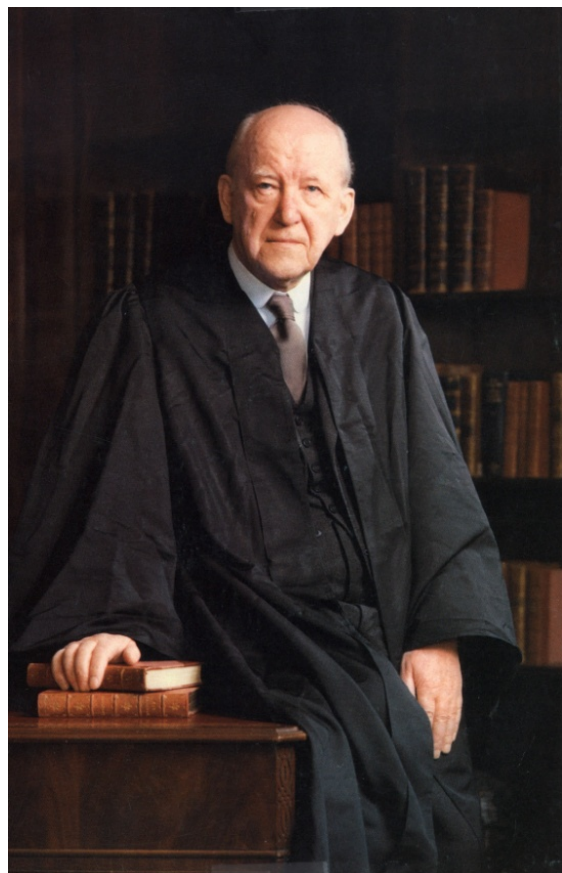
A Summary

“Just as **sacrifice** is directed to the need created by our guilt, **propitiation** to the need that arises from the wrath of God, and **reconciliation** to the need arising from our alienation from God, so **redemption** is directed to the bondage to which our sin has consigned us.”



John Murray
1898-1975

Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)



“The Cross is the vindication of God. The Cross is the vindication of the character of God. The Cross not only shows the love of God more gloriously than anything else, it shows His righteousness, His justice, His holiness, and all the glory of His eternal attributes. They are all to be seen shining together there. If you do not see them all you have not seen the Cross.”