

Christology 19

The Doctrines That Result from Christ's Finished Work

Atonement --

OT – Yom Kippur – Day of Atonement – a great day of national humiliation and repentance. It was kept on the tenth day of Tisri, that is, from the evening of the ninth to the evening of the tenth of that month, five days before the feast of tabernacles. Tisri corresponds to our September-October, so that the 10th of Tisri would be about the first of October.

Kippur means “covering” and is associated with the kapporeth, or lid that sat on the Ark of the Covenant where the sacrificial blood was sprinkled and poured on the Day of Atonement. The kapporeth was a covering, sometimes translated “mercy seat.”

from phrase “at one” + ment

as translation of Medieval Latin *adūnāmentum*;

compare Middle English “onement” – or, unity

The word atonement, is almost the only theological term of English origin. It was likely first used in Tyndale's English translation as derived from the adv. phrase at-one, meaning "in accord." In the English Bible, it is mainly used to translate the Hebrew word *kipur*. And it occurs repeatedly throughout the Old Testament.

Oxford English Dictionary gives us usages of the word:

1533 Q. Cath. Parr Erasm. Comm. Crede 162 -- To reconcile hymselfe and make an onement with god.

1599 Bp. Hall Sat. iii. vii. 69 -- Which never can be set at onement more.

1555 Fardle Facions ii. xii. 298 -- The redempcion, reconciliacion, and at onement of mankinde with God the father.

a. In the Old Testament the fundamental Hebrew word for atonement means to cover. Psalm 32:1. According to it, sin is expiated or atoned for by covering it. --

Ps. 32:1 - How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!

New Testament

(1) Katallage (Romans 5:11), means a change or an exchange; i.e., a change from enmity to love, and so reconciliation. --

exchange in the business of money changers, exchanging equivalent values. Or an adjustment of a difference; reconciliation, restoration to favor. In the NT it describes the restoration of the favor of God to sinners.

KJV – Rom. 5:11 - And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

NASB - Rom. 5:11 - And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Most modern translations render this word "reconciliation" in its other occurrences throughout the N.T.

It is connected to the Greek term "Hilasmos," meaning propitiation. Both Jews and Gentiles perfectly understood the meaning of hilasmos. When under a sense of sin they would make a propitiation—they approached the altar and laid upon it the sacrificial victim. 1 John 2:2.

The Hilasterion was another name for the kapporeth, or mercy seat, which was sprinkled with the blood of a propitiatory sacrifice. So, atonement was the result of making reconciliation through sacrifice, which covered sin.

From Holman Bible Dictionary – The atonement as penal, sacrificial, and substitutionary

Atonement as Penal

The biblical concept of atonement cannot be understood except in the context of the wrath of God against sin. The need for atonement arises in the earliest stages of the biblical narrative, as the newly created humans rebel against the command of God. For their treasonous disobedience against their Creator, Adam and Eve are told that they face death and have brought the curse of God upon themselves and the entire created order (Gen. 3:13-19).

As a result of this primeval mutiny, the entire world-system stands at enmity with the purposes of God (Eph. 2:2) and is blinded by the deception of Satan (2 Cor. 4:4). Not only did human beings chafe at the command God had given in the garden, they have rebelled against the law He revealed to them within their hearts (Rom. 2:14-16) and in specific revelation (Rom. 3:19-20). As such, each individual human has turned to idolatry (Rom. 1:18-32) and stands guilty before the tribunal of God (Rom. 3:9-18).

The Hebrew prophets warned that the world was kindling the wrath of God against unrighteousness. There would come, they foretold, a great day of cataclysmic judgment against all rebellion. The secrets of human hearts would be exposed, and none would be able to stand against the fury of God's righteous justice (Ps. 1:5; Nah. 1:6; Mal. 3:2). The wrath of God would tear down every citadel of opposition in a fiery revelation of His retribution against sin (Isa. 2:12; 61:2).

The OT prophets, however, also spoke of One who would bear in His own body the condemnation of God against sinners. By His suffering under the wrath of God, the Prophet Isaiah wrote, the coming Servant of God would save many from condemnation (Isa. 53). The NT writings identify these Suffering Servant passages with Jesus' death on a cross outside the gates of Jerusalem (Acts 8:32-35).

Jesus Himself recognized the penal nature of the atonement, speaking of the cross as a fiery “baptism” He was to undergo (Mark 10:38; Luke 12:49-50). He expressed anguish at the prospect of the cross (John 12:27) and even pleaded to be delivered from it, if such were possible (Luke 22:42). The gospels picture vividly the penal nature of the atonement by describing the agony of Jesus on the cross, crying out as One forsaken by God (Matt. 27:46). They describe the crucifixion as accompanied by signs of eschatological judgment—darkness, natural disturbances, and the raising of dead from their graves (Matt. 27:45-54).

The apostles and NT writers spoke of Jesus’ atonement as absorbing the wrath of God due to sinners. They described Jesus’ death as a propitiation that turns aside the wrath of God (Rom. 3:25; 1 John 4:7). The Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians that Jesus was counted as a sinner in order that sinners might be counted as righteous in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus bore the curse of the law in order to bring the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant to the Gentiles (Gal. 3:10-14). Peter similarly spoke of Jesus bearing sins “in His body on the tree” (1 Pet. 2:24 HCSB).

The sin-bearing work of Christ at Golgotha cannot be understood, however, apart from His resurrection. Peter preached to onlookers at Pentecost that Jesus’ resurrection is proof God did not abandon Him to the grave but has exalted Him as the triumphant Messiah to whom are due the covenant promises of the OT (Acts 4:22-36). Although Jesus was considered “smitten of God” on the cross (Isa. 53:4), in the resurrection He is “established as the powerful Son of God” (Rom. 1:4 HCSB). Having borne fully the penalty of death due for sin, Jesus is now raised from the dead as the righteous One in whom God is well pleased. Because Jesus has satisfied the penalty for sin, believers wait expectantly for the One who “rescues us from the coming wrath” (1 Thess. 1:10 HCSB).

Atonement as Sacrificial

The NT sets the atonement in the context of the OT sacrificial system. The concept of sacrifice emerges in even the earliest passages of the biblical narrative, with the sacrifice of Abel from his flock (Gen. 4:4-5). Sacrifice played a crucial role in the deliverance of

the Israelites from Egypt as the sacrifice of the Passover lamb saved the Hebrew children from the dark visitation of the angel of death (Exod. 12:1-32). The Mosaic covenant brought with it a detailed sacrificial system to be followed by the Israelite nation (Lev. 1:1–7:38).

The NT asserts that the animal sacrifices of the old covenant pointed to Jesus' sacrificial offering of Himself at Golgotha. In the identification of Jesus with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, the prophet describes the Messiah as a "guilt offering" (Isa. 53:10), pointing back to the Mosaic sacrificial code (Lev. 5-7). John the Baptist emphasizes the sacrificial nature of the mission of Christ by calling Him the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus Himself speaks of voluntarily "laying down His life" for His sheep as a sacrificial offering to God (John 10:11).

Paul spoke of Christ as "our Passover," directly tying the atoning work of Christ to the sacrifice of the Passover lamb (1 Cor. 5:7). He uses OT sacrificial language to speak of Jesus' atonement as a "sweet-smelling aroma" offered to God (Eph. 5:2). Similarly, Peter uses sacrificial lamb imagery to speak of believers as being purchased by the "precious blood" of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:18-19) who, like the OT sacrificial animals, is "spotless." In his vision on the Isle of Patmos, John sees Jesus being worshiped by the redeemed multitudes because He is the sacrificial Lamb who purchased them with His blood (Rev. 5:1-14).

The sacrificial nature of the atonement is perhaps most clearly explained in the book of Hebrews. For the writer of Hebrews, the crucified Jesus is the ultimate sacrifice, which permanently deals with sin and thus ends the sacrificial system (Heb. 10:11-12). The writer asserts that the blood of animals was never sufficient to take away human sin but merely pointed to the coming sacrifice of Messiah (Heb. 10:4).

Hebrews explains, perhaps to Jewish Christians contemplating a return to the Mosaic sacrificial system, that Jesus is the priest (Heb. 7:23-28) who appears before God to offer His own blood for the sins of the people as a once-for-all sacrifice (Heb. 9:11-28). Alluding to the animals sacrificed "outside the camp" in the old covenant, the writer

points to Jesus' suffering outside the gates of Jerusalem (Heb. 11–13). His resurrection from the dead is proof that God has heard the cries of this final Priest and has accepted His sacrifice (Heb. 5:7).

Atonement as Substitutionary

The penal and sacrificial language describing the atonement makes clear that Jesus' death was substitutionary. Just as the Israelites of the OT were to offer animals in the place of sinners, so Jesus' death is described as being offered in the place of those who deserved the wrath of God. Jesus spoke of His death as a shepherd laying down His life for His sheep (John 10:11). He describes His mission as offering Himself as a "ransom" for sinners (Mark 10:45). The night before His betrayal Jesus told His disciples that the bread He broke before them represented "My body, which is given for you" (Luke 22:19 HCSB).

After speaking of the universal condemnation deserved by sinners, Paul wrote of Jesus' blood being set forth as a propitiation for sin so that God might remain just in His punishment of sin while justifying those who have faith in Jesus (Rom. 3:2-26). Paul anchors the assurance of God's people that they will not face God's wrath in the fact that God "did not even spare His own Son, but offered Him up for us all" (Rom. 8:31-34 HCSB). The apostle spoke of the substitutionary nature of the atonement as being at the heart of his gospel proclamation (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Jesus' suffering the penalty for sin, Paul asserts, was "on our behalf" (2 Cor. 5:21). He contends that Jesus' bearing the curse of God was "for us" (Gal. 3:13). The apostle employs ransom language to speak of Jesus' mediatorial work (1 Tim. 2:5-6). Similarly, Peter speaks of Jesus' death for sins as being the righteous dying in the place of the unrighteous, thereby accomplishing reconciliation with God (1 Pet. 3:18).

The substitutionary nature of the atonement emphasizes the importance of the humanity of Jesus. As noted above, the Bible points to Jesus' role as a God-appointed Mediator between God and humanity (1 Tim. 2:5). In taking on human nature, Jesus identified Himself with sinful humanity in suffering and ultimately in death. As the second Adam, Jesus represents humanity by overcoming the temptations of the world and the devil (Matt. 4:1-11). He suffers on

the cross, not as a detached demigod, but as a human being born under the law (Gal. 4:4-5). In bearing God's wrath in the place of sinful humanity, Jesus is the "forerunner" (Heb. 6:20) who triumphs over death's hold on the human race (Heb. 2:14). As such, He is able to present to God the redeemed "brothers" for whom He suffered, died, and was resurrected to life (Heb. 2:10-13).

The biblical doctrine of substitutionary atonement causes the biblical writers to marvel at God's love for the world (1 John 2:2), but it also impels them to wonder at the profoundly personal nature of the atonement. Jesus gave His life because He loves His church (Eph. 5:25-27). The Apostle Paul can proclaim with vigor not only that in the atonement God "was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19) but also that the Lord Jesus "loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

From "By Grace Alone"

WHAT WAS CHRIST ACCOMPLISHING ON THAT CROSS?

Let's look at the specific language of Scripture in order to gain a fuller understanding of what Jesus accomplished in His death ---

1) He became the ultimate and final substitutionary **sacrifice** for sin.

Hebrews 9:24-26 - "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: Nor yet that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world. But, now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the **sacrifice** of Himself."

Christ sacrificed Himself one time for the purpose of putting away sin, fulfilling the "type" of all the animal sacrifices that could not satisfy the debt of sin.

Hebrews 10:11,12 - "And, every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: But this man (Christ) after He had offered **one sacrifice** for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God."

Why was Christ able to sit down after sacrificing Himself? Because He finished the work He had come to earth to accomplish - He put away sin forever. And, He was seated at God's right hand, a position of power and authority, testifying that God accepted the sacrifice and the completion thereof.

2) In describing the death of Christ, Paul borrowed a heathen word - **propitiation**. The ancient heathens believed that the hardships in their lives were the result of angry gods. So, they set out to appease that anger. For instance, they would sacrifice their children to the "fires of Molech" (Lev.18:21), or into the red-hot hands of metal gods who had furnaces burning within. They believed that the screams and eventual death of the babies would "propitiate" or put-off, the wrath of these gods.

Jesus Christ was a propitiatory sacrifice who offered Himself up to appease the wrath of God Almighty.

Romans 3:25 - "Whom God hath set forth to be a **propitiation** through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

1st John 4:10 - "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** for our sins."

3) Christ **redeemed** fallen sinners in His death. The Greek word translated "redemption" is "*exagorazo*" meaning "to buy out". It had the particular implication of buying a slave in order to set him free. The Greek word "*lutro*" translated "to redeem" means "to release in receipt of ransom" with the emphasis on the actual release of the slave, since his price was paid.

Christ referred to sinners as "servant (or bonds slave) to sin". (John 8:34) And, Paul declared "the wages of sin is death". (Rom.6:23) Meanwhile, God's Holy justice, which demanded the sinner's penalty, had to be satisfied. Our sins needed to be remitted. But, "without the shedding of blood there is no remission". (Heb.9:22)

Sinners, then, are bonds slaves on the market of sin, and only the blood sacrifice of one whose blood is worth enough can purchase sinners and set them free! So, with the price of His own blood in His hand, Christ stood before the Justice and Righteousness of God and bought the guilty slaves – redeeming them.

Romans 3:23,24 - "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus."

Hebrews 9:12 - "Neither the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained **eternal redemption** for us."

Notice that Christ only had to enter into God's presence once to complete the transaction, and the redemption Christ purchased was eternal redemption. Therefore, the redeemed one is fully paid for and can never again be enslaved.

4) In the same manner, Christ was the **ransom** for guilty sinners. The ransom was the price actually paid to release someone from a debt. Dead sinners owed a debt they were incapable of paying. But, Christ was the sufficient price to pay that debt and buy back the property that was seized in the debt foreclosure.

Matthew 20:28 - "Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a **ransom** for many."

1st Timothy 2:5,6 – "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a **ransom** for all, to be testified in due time."

5) Christ was on the cross making **reconciliation** between God and men. He was bringing together two sides that had previously been at odds with each other. Not that God needed to be reconciled to man, but men were doomed to destruction if they were not reconciled to God.

Hebrews 2:17 - "Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make **reconciliation** for the sins of the people."

2nd Corinthians 5:18,19 - "And all things are of God, who hath **reconciled** us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, **reconciling** the world unto Himself not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of **reconciliation**."

Romans 5:10 - "For if, when we were enemies, we were **reconciled** to God by the death of His son, much more, being **reconciled** we shall be saved by his life."

Paul says that if, while we were rebels who hated God, Jesus brought us back together by His death on the cross, then we know for certain that, since we've been reconciled, we'll most certainly be saved by His resurrection. Our reconciliation to God was achieved when Christ paid for our sin debt and removed our trespasses. Thus, reconciliation through the shed blood of Christ is our guarantee of safe standing before the Judge of Eternity.

6) His death **justified** guilty sinners. That's a legal, or judicial, term used to indicate that a person has been declared righteous. It does not mean that the elect are necessarily made perfect in-and-of themselves.

In other words, sinners are not made personally holy and righteous in order to be accepted before God. Rather, they are declared to be sinless despite their lives and obvious guilt. God looks on them as though they had never sinned because Christ bore their sins for

them. Then, they are judicially “imputed” a righteousness they gained from Christ’s own perfection and finished work.

The Bible teaches three great imputations:

- Adam’s sin is imputed to every man, evidenced by the fact that all men die.
- The sins of the elect were placed on Christ at Calvary, imputing their guilt to Him.
- Christ’s own personal righteousness is imputed to believers.

But, the point for the moment is that Christ actually, wholly and completely justified those for whom He died.

Isaiah 53:11 - "He (God) shall see of the travail of His (Christ's) soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant **justify** many; for He shall bear their iniquities."

Acts 13:38-39 - “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are **justified** from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.”

Romans 3:23-24 - “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being **justified** freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

7) Christ **sanctified** these justified ones; meaning that He "set them apart" for the private use of a Holy God. The Greek term translated “sanctified” is “*hagiazō*”, from the root “*hagios*” which is usually translated “holy”. They both have the same root meaning, which is to be “set apart” or “separated” by God for His exclusive purpose.

Hebrews 10:10 - "By the which will (God's will) we are **sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

Hebrews 2:11 – “For both he that **sactifieth** and they who are **sanctified** are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

1 Corinthians 6:11 – “And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are **sanctified**, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

8) In sanctifying these people, He “**perfected**” them, or made them complete, enabling them to stand before a Righteous, Holy God.

Hebrews 10:14 - "For by one offering He hath **perfected** forever them that are sanctified."

And, if they are perfected forever, then they can never be held guilty, again.

Again, this is an imputed perfection. God held Christ as personally, legally guilty for the sins of the people for whom he was the vicarious sacrifice. God poured out His wrath on His Son, instead of on the sinners who deserved it. Then, God held the redeemed sinners as personally, legally innocent! He sees them as sanctified and holy, completed and perfect, as a result of Christ's atoning work.

So to summarize, Scripture tells us that, on the cross, Christ ---

- 1) Was the final substitutionary **sacrifice** for sin
- 2) Was the **propitiation** that satisfied the wrath of God
- 3) Paid the **redemption** price to purchase guilty sinners
- 4) Was the **ransom** price that was paid
- 5) Made **reconciliation** between God and man
- 6) **Justified** guilty sinners, satisfying God's Holy Justice
- 7) **Sanctified** those people, or set them apart as holy

8) **Perfected forever** those whom He bought, justified and sanctified.