

Sin and Atonement Class 5

What is the atonement of Christ?

The term "atonement" from the Oxford Dictionary:

Reparation for a wrong or injury.

- 1.1 (in religious contexts) reparation or expiation for sin.
- 1.2 (the Atonement in Christian Theology) The reconciliation of God and humankind through Jesus Christ.

Note it can mean the very act itself or the result of the act. Unless you understand how this concept is used from two different perspectives you will argue till hell freezes over.

In Hebrew, the main verb for this concept is kaphar, which has the basic meaning of “to cover”

Deuteronomy 21:8,9

Accept atonement, O LORD, for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, and do not set the guilt of innocent blood in the midst of your people Israel, so that their blood guilt be atoned for. So you shall purge the guilt of innocent blood from your midst, when you do what is right in the sight of the LORD.

In the Greek New Testament, there are more terms, and since the crucifixion of Christ was a critical apex, it is natural the the NT writers would have both perspectives of “point” and “result”.

katallagē: reconciliation (relationship, with God)

hilasmos: propitiation (appeasement, toward God)

lutron: ransom (price, cost)
apolutrōsis: redemption (price)

exagorazō: to redeem (freedom, unbound)

Resultant peace with God

Romans 5:11

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Righteous appeasement to God

1John 2:2

He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Costly price of his life

Matthew 20:28

even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Forgiveness of Sin

Matthew 26:28

for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

High cost through his life and forgiveness

Ephesians 1:7

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

Freedom from the curse/penalty

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

In the NT, there is also the motivation of the atonement and real life application today

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

1 Peter 2:21,22

For to this you have been called,
because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example, so that you
might follow in his steps. He committed
no sin, neither was deceit found in his
mouth.

What happened at the cross?

The exchange occurred

He is the perfect sacrifice

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

He takes our curses

Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

He covers us with his perfect righteousness

Philippians 3:9

and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

Some views of the atonement that misses the point

Richard Rohr

The crucifixion of Jesus is the preeminent example of God's love reaching out to us. It is at the same moment the worst and best thing in human history. The Franciscans, led by John Duns Scotus (1266-1308), even claimed that instead of a "necessary sacrifice," the cross was a freely chosen revelation of Total Love on God's part.

In so doing, they reversed the engines of almost all world religion up to that point, which assumed that we had to spill blood to get to a distant and demanding God. On the cross, the Franciscans believed, God was "spilling blood" to reach out to us! This is a sea change in consciousness. The cross, instead of being a transaction, was seen as a dramatic demonstration of God's outpouring love, meant to utterly shock the heart and turn it back toward trust and love of the Creator.

Steve Chalke

how then, have we come to believe that at the cross this God of love suddenly decides to vent his anger and wrath on his own Son? The fact is that the cross isn't a form of cosmic child abuse – a vengeful Father, punishing his Son for an offense he has not even committed. Understandably, both people inside and outside of the Church have found this twisted version of events morally dubious and a huge barrier to faith
