

ATONEMENT of CHRIST

By: Bill Richardson

Edited by: Fay Camp

ATONEMENT defined and explained: The word is found only in Romans 5:11, A. V. (Authorized Version), and not at all in the R. V., (Revised Version), of the NT, but it is frequently found in the OT and the idea runs throughout the Scriptures. "The Atonement is the reconciling work of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in gracious fulfillment of the loving purpose of His Father; whereby, through the sacrifice of Himself upon the cross, once for all, on behalf and instead of sinful man, satisfaction was made for the sins of the world, and communion between God and man restored." (Historical and Scriptural Digest, Master Bible, p. 891).

The Layman's Bible Encyclopedia, printed by the Southwestern Company, Nashville, Tennessee, 1964 reads in part pp 69-70: ATONEMENT: "A theological term denoting the restoration of man to a right relationship with God through: (1) the sacrificial system of the religion of Israel, (*in the Old Testament*), and (2) the obedience and death of Jesus Christ, (*in the New Testament*). TLBE continues.

"The entire Bible is a story of God's bearing the sin of man in an effort to reconcile him to his creator, to his neighbor, and to himself. This story reaches its culmination in the life and death of the One who lived in freedom from man's universal subjection to the powers of sin, death, and the world.

"The meaning of the cross is expressed in the New Testament in various metaphorical terms. It is impossible to grasp one facet, forget the other, and hope to reach an adequate understanding of the atonement. The atonement is not a theory; it is an event, an act of God in history, a sacrifice by which God's justice is satisfied, man's sins covered, perfect love fulfilled and set forth as a goal, and victory over sin and death proclaimed and achieved, once and for all time.

"It is the heart of confession and testimony which the church must make to the world. '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.' "

The reading and studying, and giving thought to what is said in those two detailed definitions must cause, (motivate) us to realize and desire to look into greater depths of biblical application and into responsibility that we have to the great blessings manifested by God and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, for all mankind.

In preparing for this study I was blessed to have my mind refreshed by some defining words of responsibility and my heart dictates that I set it forth herein. Again I am quoting the Encyclopedia referenced above as it uses the defining words for responsibility thusly: "Accountability, moral accountability, as responsibility of parents or responsibility for sin; reality." It continues and states, "The Bible contains a number of passages, which indicate that men are held responsible to God in proportion to their abilities and the privileges which have been accorded them." (This writer with all his heart believes that).

Here are some of the "responsible" scriptures given to support what was quoted...should you desire to look them up to and read and study. (Ezek 18:1-4, 18-20,30; 33:4; Matt 10:11-15; 11:20-24; 12:41,42; 23:31-35; Luke 21:1-4; John 15:22,24; Acts

17:30, 31; Rom 12:3,6-8; Eph. 4:7; 1 Tim 6:20). REFERENCE: Matt. 25:14-30; Luke 9:5; 10:10-15; 11:31, 32, 49-51. Let me tell you, "Good reading." Praise the Lord!

The question, "What is man?" Man is God's creation (Genesis 1:26) and God loves him! "*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Romans 5:8). How great is God's love for us? God loves us so much that He spared not His Son (Romans 8:32) who died and became a ransom (Matthew 20:28) for us, when we were without strength to do anything good even when we were ungodly and unworthy sinners (Romans 5:6-7) tells us that.

Sin brought death, and all men shall die. "*For since by man came death, by MAN, (Christ), also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive*" (1 Corinthians 15:21-22). Adam is the man through whom death spread to the entire human race (see Romans 5:12).

Jesus Christ who overcame death by His resurrection. Because of His atonement and by faith in Him, we too will be made alive at the resurrection, the Second Coming (see Romans: 23). The Christian hope lies in the fact of Christ's resurrection (see Romans 15:20). "*And you, (Sinner; Christian), who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now, He has reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight—if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel...*" (Colossians 1:21-23).

Not all have heard the gospel in this present age, but the gospel is designed to be preached to all people, and we are charged to go and preach to the entire world! We are stewards of the gospel and we must acknowledge that...and go...and preach.

Christ's atonement, His death on the cross, was for our sins. "*He (Christ) Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we having died to sins might live for righteousness, for by His stripes (wounds) you were healed*" (1 Peter 2:24). ("If That Isn't Love, There Are No Stars in the Sky!"). Christ's endurance of the crucifixion on the cross was more than an example. He paid the penalty for our sins in order that we might escape the guilt and power of sin and live a new life of righteousness. PRAISE THE LORD! And Amen!

Christ's atonement, His death on the cross, was a sacrifice...for us, in fact or in truth (all mankind), and to God. Now read with me what the Bible says, "*Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. Walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma*" (Ephesians 5:1-2). We are to walk in love! What does that mean to us? – You and me! We are to walk with Jesus, in love, the kind of love He had for sinners. Jesus loves sinners, but hates sin. (Read John 15:9; Galatians 1: 4; 1 John 3:16). Abide in love...a love so strong and dedicated, that we would lay down our lives for the brethren. That is what Christ asked us to do in 1 John 3:16. That's an AMEN! Walking with our Lord is serious. Very serious! And we must know how and what is meant to walk with the Lord.

Christ's atonement, His death on the cross, was to bring us to God. Note how it is explained in the Bible as it is written to say, "*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just (righteous) for the unjust (unrighteous), that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit*" (1 Peter 3:18).

Christ is the great example for those who suffer for righteousness. But His is more than an example. As the righteous One, He suffered the penalty due us who were unrighteous so that we could have fellowship with God. Christ being put to death in the flesh as man made him alive by His own divine power and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The warning to us is set forth in 1 Peter 4:1 as it says, *“Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased to be controlled by sin”* We must be prepared (arm ourselves) to suffer unjustly, and to face abuse with Christ and having His attitude, that is; His willingness to suffer for doing good. We must arm ourselves with the best “weapon”, and that would be, the *same mind* of Christ.

Though Christ was always sinless (1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15), He nevertheless fully identified with sinful humanity by coming “in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3) and becoming subject to temptation, “suffering and death” (Mark 1:12-13; Hebrews 2:10; 4:15). Christ “died to sin” (Romans 6:10) once for all; but the life that He lived, He lived to God. By His death, Christ paid the penalty for sin and thus broke its power. Because sin brought death, He overcame death.

Christ’s atonement, His death on the cross, was to restore our fellowship with God, His Church, and with the brethren. *“For God has not destined us for ‘wrath’, but for ‘obtaining salvation’ through our Lord Jesus Christ, ‘who died for us’, so that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him”* (1 Thessalonians 5:9-10). These words explain how salvation is by Jesus Christ.

Christ’s accomplishment of salvation is through His death for us. The reason He died was so that we (His Kingdom, His Church, His Body) might live together. It is the resurrection of Jesus Christ, His atonement for sin, which are the basis of our new life in Christ and our hope of the resurrection. (For “wrath” see 1 Thessalonians 1:10). (For “obtaining salvation” see also 2 Thessalonians 2:13f); (for “who died for us” see also Romans 14:9). All these scriptures are great scriptures to read and study.

“Forgiveness of sin is one of the greatest blessings a believer receives from the atonement of Christ. Read with me from Ephesians 1:7, 13-14; it is written, 7. *“In Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace. V13. In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, (believed in Him) you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of Promise, V14. Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s saving activity, especially as manifested in the word of Christ.”*

“Redemption refers primarily to God’s saving activity, especially as manifested in the work of Christ. Those who were formerly slaves, (slaves to sin), have been purchased by the blood of Christ and are now sons of God in the divine household and await final consummation of redemption whose scope will embrace all history and nature.” (Layman’s Bible Encyclopedia p.’s 679-680).

(See “redemption” at Colossians 1:14; Romans 3:24-25; 1 Corinthians 1:30); see “message of truth” at Ephesians 4:21; Col. 1:5); (see “sealed” at Ephesians 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22); (see “given” at 2 Corinthians 1:22). In order to receive the greatest of meanings it is a blessing to read and study these referenced scriptures. “Great is the Word of God!” Amen!

The believer receives “peace” from the atonement of Christ. Freedom from disturbance or agitation; calm; repose; a state of quiet or tranquility. *“The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace”* (Numbers 6:26)—was peace from enemies and the attendant material prosperity.

“Those who trusted in God were promised inward or spiritual peace. Christians, as children of the God of Peace, are exhorted to be at peace with one another. The gospel of Christ may aptly be described as a message of spiritual peace from God to man” (TLBE pp 595-6).

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have ‘Peace with God’ through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:12). It is through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ that we have a new relationship with God. We were once enemies of God, but now we are His friends (Romans 5:10). Now, the Christian’s confidence that the purpose for which God created us will be ultimately realized. Know this, “We can and do have peace with God.”

The believer receives “reconciliation” from the atonement of Christ. The Bible tells us that, *“God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing (not counting) their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation”* (2 Corinthians 5:19).

Reconciliation is used in the New Testament to refer to the changed relationship between God and man, which is the result of the death and resurrection of Christ. Through the death of Christ and the consequent exercise of the power of divine forgiveness, the barriers between God and man have been removed and both are able to enjoy full fellowship with the other. For other scriptures on “reconciliation” read and study (Romans 5:10-11; 11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:19-22).

The believer receives “righteousness” from the atonement of Christ. Note the scriptures in 2 Corinthians 5:12-21, which is the end of the chapter. In these verses Paul is teaching several principles, but the overall subject being taught is “Reconciled and Transformed.” He concludes in verse 21 with these words, *“For He (God) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become (be made) the righteousness of God in Him.”*

What is your rendering of that verse? One thing, (which is a blessing), is known, reconciliation between God and man has taken place only because God through Jesus has removed our sin. In His death, Christ took the punishment for our sin that we might be forgiven and the righteousness of God “might” become a reality in our lives.

Notice with me what is said in (1 Corinthians 1:30), *“...Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctifications, and redemption.”* In verse 21 of 2 Corinthians 5 the word “might become the righteousness of God” is used. (In evaluating the expression it comes to me that, that is a condition to man, that man is obligated so that by doing what otherwise might be or become will come to fruition.)

God and Christ did their part, and it was for the benefit of man. We (you and I) have a part also. We do it so “That we might become” the righteousness of God if we do what is commanded by God’s word and remain faithful until death.” There is much to be thankful for, and there are great responsibilities we must, with gladness of heart, accept, do, and be grateful.

The believer receives “justification” from the atonement of Christ. *“...being justified freely (without any cost) by His (God’s) grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God has passed over the sins that were previously committed”* (Romans 3:24-26).

The aforementioned scripture speaks to, “redemption”, “propitiation”, “faith”, “righteousness”, “remission of sin”, “forbearance of God”, and “justification.” As each of these is a subject for study, however; this study paragraph will be limited to thoughts and comments that are applicable to “justification.”

Romans 3:28 says, *“Therefore we conclude that a man is justified (declared righteous) by faith without (apart from) the deeds of the law.”* “Justification indicates the establishment of a right relationship between man and God. God through the life and death of Jesus made possible our deliverance from sin and man being reconciled and justified to God. The believer cannot earn justification, he receives it freely in return for his faith, which expresses itself in a desire to be freed from sin, in complete trust that Christ has redeemed man, and in obedience to God’s command” (TLBE p. 442).

Justification is a great study and I plan a study dedicated to it. Thus the above comments are the extent of the study presented herein.

The believer receives “access to God” from the atonement of Christ. What a blessing this is— think of it...access to God! The Bible tells us in Ephesians 2:17-18, *“And He (Christ) came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.”*

Isaiah had prophesied a day when God’s peace would be proclaimed to those “far off” and “near” (Isaiah 57:19). Through the gospel of Christ the Spirit brings Gentiles “you who were afar off” and Jews (“those who were near”) together before the Father, in fulfillment of Isaiah’s promise. (See also John 10:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Eph. 4:4-6).

The believer receives “cleansing” from the atonement of Christ. It must be said again, “What a blessing,” Now, let your heart be admonished in this, “...if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin” (see also Isaiah 2:5; 1 Corinthians 6:11).

The believer receives “liberty” from the atonement of Christ. Know assuredly, “for freedom Christ has made us free.” *“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage”* (Galatians 5:1).

Go ahead, read and study Galatians 5:1-6. This great paragraph of scripture discussing “Christian Liberty”, you will be blessed when you read and study it. Please make the proper application taught, and let it have place in your walk with the Lord!

The believer receives “freedom from the devil’s power” from the atonement of Christ. *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood He Himself likewise share in the same, that through death He might destroy him who has power of death, that is the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Hebrews 2:14-15). In order for Christ to triumph over death and the devil by enduring God’s judgment upon sinners, it was necessary for Him to share their “flesh and blood” nature. The devil’s power to kill is destroyed only when our sin has been punished—in Christ’s death. Additional scriptures to read and study about “flesh and blood” I suggest (Matt. 16:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; Gal 1:16; Eph. 6:12).

The believer receives “Christ’s intercession” from the atonement of Christ. This is a great blessing! *“God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes rather, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us”* (Romans 8:33-34).

“Christ is the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:2). *Propitiation refers to turning away God’s wrath. “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”* (1 John 4:10).

God’s holiness demands punishment for man’s sin. God, therefore out of love (John 3:16), sent His son to make atonement for the believer’s sin. In this way the Father’s wrath is propitiated (satisfied). Forgiveness through Christ’s atoning sacrifice is not limited to one particular group only (see John 1:29; it takes away the sins of the world). It must, however, be received by faith (John 3:16). This verse does not teach that all people ultimately will be saved, but that God is an impartial God.

“Therefore in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted (tested), He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Heb. 2:17-18).

We know of the humble and exalted Christ by these words written about Him, *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of man”* (Philippians 2:5-7). But continue, and read and study the rest of the scripture paragraph in verses 8,9,10, and 11. It will be humbling to you and any who read and study these scriptures. God bless you now!

There are different ways, I suppose, to end or complete a study before you pray about it again. But to me, my heart is so full of humility, joy, and desire I just want to let it pour out in closing this lesson and ask you to evaluate what I have chosen for my thankful heart to say.

ALL children of God can and must stand firm and declare the glory of God and because of His love and grace, pronounce this to the whole world, yea more diligently.

The scriptures and commentary that have been set forth in this study have been of great benefit to me. The wonderful scriptures and principles that we studied together have been motivating to my conscience. It is my prayer that you have read and studied this lesson and that you will accept all truth herein and that it will be a conscience server to you also. Accepting truth and acting responsibly is truly a great blessing.

The well-trained conscience is equal to the knowledge, abiding faith, and love that we expose or submit our mind to. With confidence I say that you studied this lesson with faith and love, and that it will be of great benefit to you.

With confidence I also say, that you desire to be blessed and to gain more knowledge. True abiding biblical knowledge is associated with responsibilities. In faith and love please seek and search diligently for responsible knowledge. It is found, in the study of God’s word, the truth. Please accept it as your duty—your obligation. Your duty must be associated with and become an active part of your abiding faithfully in the Lord’s Church until death.

The church that I am speaking of is [the church you read about in the Bible. The cost was the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The church is His Body, His Kingdom, which is His Church. Please be an obedient dedicated part of the church of the Bible. You cannot pass through Heaven's gate if you are not in Christ's Body, His Church. It surely is the Church, the only Church that you read about in the Bible. That is the truth. Note more of what is said in the Bible about truth and the church

"Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). Do not compromise the truth. Where the Bible speaks definitively on a subject, we must be firm in our resolve concerning that truth. The Bible speaks clearly as to the number of churches having a scriptural right to exist. ONE! Jesus promised to build His church, not "Churches" (Matthew 16:18). On the day of Pentecost, the saved were added to the church (Acts 2:47). Paul said there is one body (Ephesians 4:4). Earlier in the same epistle Paul equated that body with the church (Ephesians 1:23). Later, Paul uses 12 nouns and pronouns to describe the church—all of them singular (Ephesians 5:23-32). This settles the matter of how many churches Jesus built and how many existed in the New Testament.

We must not be ashamed to say what the Bible says on this subject (Mark 8:38). Let us all prepare ourselves to speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11). Anything less is to do God and His word a terrible injustice.

I invite you to view and use my Website, www.geocities.com/dubbyb please note other consecrated writings. I request also that you please advertise my Website. There is a writing posted on my Website that I am sure you will want to view and copy. The writing title is, "The Church of The Bible, Christ's Church." It has a two-page enclosure, which has the title, "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED." Please study these "biblical-truth" writings with an honest and receptive heart to gain truth and knowledge. Please accept the truth and become obedient, and walk with the LORD. You will be blessed! Heaven will be your home. God bless you for studying with me on this great subject. God loves you...and I do too! Your servant in the Lord...

Bill Richardson
Member, Hartselle Church of Christ
Hartselle, AL