

THE ATONEMENT



“The cross is a pool in which a child
can wade as well as an ocean in
which an elephant can swim.”

- unknown

“Christianity is the theology of the cross and the theology of the cross is the atonement.”

- M. Luther

Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in
my place condemned He stood -
Sealed my pardon with His blood.
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Guilty, vile and helpless we, Spotless
Lamb of God was He; full atonement!
Can it be?
Hallelujah, what a Savior!

- Phillip Bliss

“The atonement is the central doctrine of Christianity. It is the heart of the Christian faith.”

- J. Boice

“The atonement is the purpose of the incarnation and the explanation of the gospel.”

- J. I. Packer

Isaiah 53:7

⁷ He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth; like a lamb that is led to slaughter, and like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, so He did not open His mouth.

John 1:29

²⁹ The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

Rev. 5:6, 8, 12 & 13

⁶ And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. ⁸ When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ¹² saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” ¹³ And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.”

“The cross is about the heart of the Gospel which is substitution and satisfaction by way of an acceptable blood atonement.” – R.C. Sproul

“The root ‘kaphar’ is used some 150 times in the OT. Basic to the word meaning is to ‘cover’ or ‘conceal’. It came to mean ‘to atone by offering a substitute.’ There are 49 instances of this in Leviticus alone and the verb is used almost exclusively in connection with the removal of sin or defilement. It seems clear that this word aptly illustrates the theology of reconciliation in the OT. The life of the sacrificial animal specifically symbolized by its blood was required in exchange for the life of the worshipper. Sacrifice of animals in OT theology was not merely an expression of thanks to the deity by a cattle raising people. It was the symbolic expression of innocent life given for guilty life.” - TWOT

“The noun form is used 27 times and always refers to the golden cover of the sacred chest in the inner shrine of the tabernacle or temple.” - TWOT

“The meaning of the term *“vicarious atonement.”* There is a difference between personal and vicarious atonement. We are interested particularly in the difference between the two in connection with the atonement of Christ. When man fell away from God, he as such owed God reparation. But he could atone for his sin only by suffering eternally penalty affixed to the transgression. This is what God might have required in strict justice, and would have required, if He had not been actuated by love and compassion for the sinner. As a matter of fact, however, God appointed a vicar in Jesus Christ to take man’s place, and this vicar atoned for sin and obtained an eternal redemption for man.”

- L. Berkhof

“Dr. Shedd calls attention to the following points of difference in this case:

- 1) Personal atonement is provided by the offending party; vicarious atonement by the offended party.
- 2) Personal atonement would have excluded the element of mercy; vicarious atonement represents the highest form of mercy.
- 3) Personal atonement would have been forever in the making and hence could not result in redemption; vicarious atonement leads to reconciliation and life everlasting.”

- L. Berkhof

“The atonement is the work Christ did in His life and death to earn our salvation.” – W. Gruden, Theo.

“The aspect of the work of Christ, and particularly His death, that secures the restoration of fellowship between individual believers and God.” – D. Mayhue, Theo.

“Often the concept of a penal-substitutionary atonement, in which the Son must die in the place of sinners to satisfy the wrath of the Father, is reproached by foes and misunderstood by friends. To many, this view of the atonement pictures the Father as inherently angry and wrathful toward man and as won over only reluctantly by the loving sacrifice of the Son. However, this is precisely backward. The Father does not love His people strictly on the grounds that Jesus died for them; rather, Jesus died for people because the Father loved them. In this sense then, the love of God is not the result of Christ’s death but rather its cause, for it is because God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to be sacrificed on the cross. God Himself is love (I John 4:8), and sending of the Son to be the propitiation for man’s sins is the consequence, expression, and demonstration of God’s love to His people. In other words, the plan of redemption is born out of the good pleasure of the Father’s free and sovereign electing love.”

– D. Mayhue, Theo.

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly that God’s love is the source, not the consequence of the atonement....God does not love us because Christ died for us; Christ died for us because God loved us. If it is God’s wrath which needed to be propitiated, it is God’s love which did the propitiating.”

– J. Stott

T or F

“It is in the cross of Jesus Christ that we find the only means by which God clears the guilty.”

- R. C. Sproul

Psalm 51:4

⁴ Against You, You only, I have
sinned

And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You
speak

And blameless when You judge.

“How many ways are there that God clears the guilty? My friends, there are no ways by which God clears the guilty! God redeems the guilty. He pays the price for the reconciliation of the guilty. But he never exonerates, clears, or acquits those He says are guilty by reason of their sin. Guilt demands satisfaction. The guilt of sinners is clearly set forth in the Bible – the indictment is there – and that is why there is an atonement.” – R.C. Sproul

“Because of sin, mankind is guilty of breaking God’s law, has incurred His righteous wrath, and is therefore alienated from Him. Man’s sin cannot be simply overlooked. For God to reconcile such guilty sinners to Himself, sin must be punished, the broken law must be satisfied, and God’s wrath must be justly assuaged. Sin is not overlooked but punished in Christ, and therefore God ‘shows His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus’ (Rom. 3:23).” – D. Mayhue, Theo.

“By this means justice has been done! At Calvary, redeeming love and retributive justice joined hands.” – J.I. Packer

Romans 3:24-26

²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; ²⁵ whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶ for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.