

Atonement

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. — 2 Corinthians 5:20 (NKJV)

Atonement stands as the central message of the Bible and of history. Since creation—and even in eternity—God has been unveiling and manifesting the scheme of redemption for humanity. Each chapter of the Bible, in some way, small or large, contributes to the overall theme.

The Lord God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son (John 3:16). Jesus was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). His ministry and the profoundest visible part of His work in human history is that of offering Himself as the "Passover" for our sins (1st Corinthians 5:7; 1st John 2:2).

It is said that an early English translator of the Bible, trying to find a means of expressing the redemptive work of God, translated the Greek word (katallage) as "at-one-ment," meaning that the offering of Jesus' blood-sacrifice reconciled man to, again, be "at-one" with his Maker. The Savior had made the means and accomplished the reality of reconciliation between offended Deity and sinful humanity. Whether that is the origin of the term, or whether it comes from the verbiage common in that day, the idea captures the essence of the ideal experience between God and sin-stained man. We can be saved.

Salvation means more than avoiding a penalty. It includes the restoration of a positive relationship. It involves fellowship. Blessings ensue. Guilt dissipates. Hope springs into existence. Life gains meaning. Heaven awaits. Nothing else begins to approach the lovely, laudable lot of those who are reconciled unto God (1st Corinthians 2:6ff).

Romans 5:8ff (NKJV) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

No more appropriate words were ever penned than those of the Apostle Paul, "Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!" (2 Corinthians 9:15 NKJV).