

Key words which explain the meaning of Atonement and other words for what Christ's death accomplished

Note: these explanations are based on material taken from the book, Ten Basic Steps to Christian Maturity

Atonement

Definition: atonement means to cover, to pardon sin. It has the idea of costly satisfaction. In the Old Testament this was temporary, with Christ's death it became permanent. Often the same word in the Bible is translated as:

Propitiation

Definition: Propitiation means "satisfaction." This is the most important aspect of the cross because it deals with the very character of God. God will not compromise His attributes of righteousness and justice which were outraged by man's deliberate violation of God's will. God's character of love motivated Him to provide a way he could bring man back into fellowship with Himself without compromising His attributes of absolute righteousness and justice. God's holy character demanded that man's sin be paid for. Man, who is born a sinner could not do this because he had no true righteousness (Isaiah 64:6), while God is absolute righteousness. Therefore, God Himself came into the world in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was born without sin and never committed an act of sin. Possessing the righteousness of God, He qualified was willing to bear all of the holy wrath of God which was due the human race. In so doing He satisfied the just demands of God's holy character against the human race thus setting God's love free to pour out upon the human race.

Key verses:

1 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.

Romans 3:23-25 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: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.

Redemption

Definition: there are three Greek words that are translated "to redeem." The first means "to buy"; the second, "to buy out," and the third, "to ransom in order to set free"

All men are born sinners and are in the slave market of sin, so to speak. When the Bible speaks of redemption, it means that Christ, the only free man who ever lived (because he was sinless and not in the slave market of sin), paid the ransom price of His own blood in order to purchase sinners out of the slave market of sin and set them free to become sons of God.

Lots of Old Testament examples of this: God redeeming Israel from Egypt, the kinsman redeemer in Ruth

John 8: 32-36 ³¹ To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³² Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.'" They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Galatians 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Sacrifice

Definition: this term looks back to the sacrifices of the Old Testament that pointed forward in time to the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

In the OT the sacrifices were object lessons teaching the sinful condition of the people and showing them that God would provide a way by which they could be reconciled to Him.

***Important to realize that the idea of sacrifice is not a human idea, but God's idea to be done His way. Many heathen religions have used sacrifice, but for different reasons: to appease a god, as magic to entice a demon, to partake of some attribute of the animal sacrificed—none of these have anything to do with the Jewish/Christian picture of sacrifice.

John 1: 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Reconciliation

Definition: The root meaning of the word in the original Greek means "to change a person from enmity to friendship." The theological meaning applies only to man, who is said to be born at enmity with God. . . . reconciliation is that aspect of Christ's death on the cross which removed the barrier of man's sin and its consequences and thus took away guilt which was the cause for enmity against God.

Romans 5: 10-11 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

2 Corinthians 5: 14-20 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.

Justification

Definition: Justification is a legal term which signifies position. The idea is that the justified individual is declared righteous, because of what Jesus did.

Key verses:

Romans 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:20-24 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.