

# **Atonement and Repentance**

**September 21, 2015**

Usually coinciding with Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), September is a significant month. This Jewish New Year is extra special because it is the Year of Jubilee! On the Jewish calendar, years are observed in seven-year cycles, with a sabbatical year on the seventh year. Then at the culmination of every seven cycles (a total of 49 years) comes the 50th year: the Year of Jubilee, when all agricultural work ceased, all land was returned to its original owner and all slaves were released into freedom! (See [Leviticus 25:8-24](#).)

In western [Christian theology](#), [atonement](#) describes how human beings can be reconciled to [God](#).<sup>[1]</sup> Atonement refers to the forgiving or pardoning of [sin](#) in general and [original sin](#) in particular through the death and resurrection of divine [Jesus](#),<sup>[2]</sup> enabling the reconciliation between [God](#) and [his creation](#).

It is used to describe the saving work that God did through Christ to reconcile the world to himself, and also of the state of a person having been reconciled to God. Christians emphasize that [Jesus](#) is the Savior of the world and through his death the sins of humanity have been forgiven.

The first metaphor; [moral influence](#) theory. With this view, Jewish Jesus did was to lead humans toward that moral change understood to have accomplished this variously through his teachings, example, founding of the Church, and the inspiring power of his [martyrdom](#) and resurrection

The second explanation, in the ransom metaphor Jesus liberates humanity from slavery to sin and Satan and thus death by giving his own life as a ransom sacrifice (Matthew 20:28). Victory over Satan consists of swapping the life of the perfect (Jesus), for the lives of the imperfect (humans).

The third metaphor; "[satisfaction](#)" theory. In this picture humanity owes a debt not to Satan, but to the sovereign God himself. A sovereign may well be able to forgive an insult or an injury in his private capacity, but because he is a sovereign he cannot if the state has been dishonored. Anselm argued that the insult given to God is so great that only a perfect sacrifice could satisfy, and that Jesus, being both God and man, was this perfect sacrifice. Therefore, the doctrine would be that Jesus gave himself as a "ransom for many", to God the Father himself.

The next 4<sup>th</sup> explanation; "[penal substitution](#) theory," which, instead of considering sin as an affront to God's honor, sees sin as the breaking of God's moral law. Placing a particular emphasis on [Romans 6:23](#) (the wages of sin is death), penal substitution sees sinful man as being subject to God's wrath with the essence of Jesus' saving work being his substitution in the sinner's place, bearing the curse in the place of man ([Galatians 3:13](#))



Children's dictionary:

**1** : the return to a state of love and harmony between God and human beings through the death of Jesus Christ

**2** : something that makes up for an offense or injury

(Revelation 3:1)

"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write: 'The words of him who has the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. 'I know your works. You have the reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

(Revelation 3:2)

Wake up, and strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your works complete in the sight of my God.

(Revelation 3:3)

Remember, then, what you received and heard. Keep it, and repent. If you will not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come against you.

(Revelation 3:4)

Yet you have still a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they will walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

(Revelation 3:5)

The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.

(Revelation 3:6)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

(Revelation 3:19)

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

(Revelation 3:20)

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

(Revelation 3:21)

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne.

(Revelation 3:22)

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'"

# Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur means "Day of Atonement" and refers to the annual Jewish observance of fasting, prayer and repentance. Part of the High Holidays, which also includes Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur is considered the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. In three separate passages in the Torah, the Jewish people are told, "the tenth day of the seventh month is the Day of Atonement. It shall be a sacred occasion for you: You shall practice self-denial."(Leviticus 23:27). Fasting is seen as fulfilling this biblical commandment. The Yom Kippur fast also enables us to put aside our physical desires to concentrate on our spiritual needs through prayer, repentance and self-improvement.

Yom Kippur is the moment in Jewish time when we dedicate our mind, body, and soul to reconciliation with God, our fellow human beings, and ourselves. We are commanded to turn to those whom we have wronged first, acknowledging our sins and the pain we might have caused. At the same time, we must be willing to forgive and to let go of certain offenses and the feelings of resentment they provoked in us. On this journey we are both seekers and givers of pardon. Only then can we turn to God and ask for forgiveness: "And for all these, God of forgiveness, forgive us, pardon us, and grant us atonement."

## 2 Corinthians 5: 19-20

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

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. For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

**Song: "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus"**

Turn your eyes upon Jesus . . .  
Look full in His wonderful face . . .  
And the things of this world,  
Will grow strangely dim . . .  
In the light of His Glory and Grace.

**Ps.24:4 A Psalm of David regarding the King of Glory and His Kingdom:**

**Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, Who seek Your face. Selah**

**Ps 51:10 A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. A prayer of repentance:**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit, Then I will teach transgressors Your ways and sinners shall be converted to you.**

**The 23rd Psalm**

***1 The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.***

***2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.***

***3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.***

***4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.***

***5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.***

***6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.***

