



Thine ears shall hear
a word behind thee, saying,
This is the way, walk ye in it.

—Isaiah 30:21



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**Doctrine of
Atonement**

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Doctrine of Atonement

from **Section 1**

2 | Psalms 139:7, 8

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.

In ancient civilizations, pagan gods were believed to wield control over distinct realms. It was thought that a person could take refuge in the realm of one god to be safe from another god who might wish him harm. The Psalmist declares the omnipresent God who governs His creation with an all-encompassing intelligence and love.

“Neither by patient travel nor by hasty flight can we withdraw from the all-surrounding Deity,” affirms a Bible authority.

from **Section 3**

8 | II Samuel 12:1

The Lord sent Nathan unto David.

After David’s sinful acts toward Bathsheba and Uriah, the prophet Nathan presents the king with a story of injustice. As supreme judge in the realm, David strongly condemns the wrongdoer. Then the prophet reveals the story as a parable and David as the sinful man. Using the prophetic language “Thus saith the Lord,” Nathan reminds the king of God’s gracious acts toward him and defines his wrongs as “despising” God’s commandment (see vv. 7, 9).

Remorseful, David responds with the admission “I have sinned against the Lord”

(v. 13). Although the first child of the king’s relationship with Bathsheba dies, their second son, Solomon, becomes David’s successor to the throne (see vv. 14, 24).

Nathan figures in two other scriptural accounts. First, in the record of David’s plans to build the Temple, it is Nathan who tells David that the honor of building this structure will not be his but his son’s (see 7:12, 13). And when David’s oldest living son, Adonijah, proclaims himself king at the end of David’s life, Nathan is instrumental in ensuring Solomon’s place as the next monarch (see I Kings 1:1–39).

from **Section 4**

12 | Mark 1:11

There came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

God’s ringing endorsement of Christ Jesus at the time of his baptism coincides with the opening of the heavens (see v. 10). This opening is described with the Greek verb *skhizō*—the term used for the rending of the Temple veil during the crucifixion (see 15:37, 38). Both events signal the dissolving of a perceived barrier between God and His creation.

from **Section 6**

18 | Acts 2:14

Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judæa, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words.

An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“...a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

Peter is responding to skepticism and mockery on the day of Pentecost, after everyone there “out of every nation under heaven ... heard them speak in his own language” (vv. 5, 6). His address is momentous for several reasons. It’s the first time since Jesus’ ascension that one of his disciples has borne witness of him publicly. The audience consists of pious Jews who have come to Jerusalem for the Pentecost festival. And it’s the Holy Spirit poured out on Jesus’ followers that day that enables Peter to speak with such authority, even after having denied knowing the Master and having been conspicuously absent at the cross.

A commentator writes: “The departure of Jesus has made witness to him necessary, while the Pentecostal baptism with the Spirit has made it possible. ... Israel’s ignorance about their Messiah, which has provoked derision rather than confession, will be reversed only if they listen to the prophet’s message [see vv. 16–21].”

18 | Acts 2:41

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

In the period following Jesus’ ascension the church grew rapidly. Acts 1:15 mentions a meeting of about a hundred twenty believers. In this verse, three thousand more are recorded. Soon afterward, the number rose to about five thousand and continued to increase (see 4:4; 5:14; 6:1; 9:31; 21:20). Christianity spread geographically as well (see examples in 8:5, 6, 12; 9:35, 42; 11:19–26).

A scriptural authority notes, “With the increase in numbers and the geographical spread of the faith, the Christian communities also experienced growth in spiritual depth and vitality.” Throughout the book of Acts, this source continues, are recorded “earnest, united prayer in crises, generous sharing of possessions, courage during persecution, and boldness in witness.” Acts 16:5 reports, “So were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.”

18 | Acts 2:42

They continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

Early Christian communities worshiped and studied together, shared meals and possessions, and cared for each other’s needs. As one scholar makes clear: “No intellectual snobbery here! No social superiority, no racial intolerance, no temperamental privileges here! They were all together, bound into a fellowship by the same ideas (the apostles’ teaching), by the same practices (the breaking of bread), by the same religious habits (prayers), and by the same economic rights and responsibility (and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need).”

Resources quoted in this issue

Cit. 2: Spurgeon, Charles H. *The Treasury of David*. 7 vols. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1882–86. Also available at biblestudytools.com/commentaries.

Cit. 18: Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 12, *Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, Jude, Revelation*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996–2001; *NLT Study Bible*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2017; Buttrick, George Arthur, Harmon, Nolan B., et al., eds. *The Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 9, *Acts, Romans*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–57.

Reconciled to God through Christ

By William E. Moody

From the July 30, 1984, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Over the years I've met people who for one reason or another had come to feel as though they'd been cut off from everything good. Some of these people felt alienated by financial circumstances; some were seriously ill; some were in prison; some had committed sins that they thought were unforgivable. And some merely felt that their lives didn't count for very much—even if they had accomplished a degree of material success in their careers.

All of these people needed reconciliation to God. I know for certain that some found it. They turned to the Science of Christ, and they discovered something deeper than they'd recognized before of God's real nature as illimitable Love, ever-present Spirit, immutable Truth. They were touched by the redeeming action of God's dear Christ, His true idea voicing good. These people feel freer now than they ever believed possible.

There can be little question, though, that many people haven't yet found the release from despair that such Christ-impelled reconciliation brings. But it is available to everyone in need of love and comfort.

In common usage, reconciliation means the reestablishment of a close relationship. It often refers to the reuniting of friends or family relations. In the deepest spiritual sense, God can be thought of as our closest friend, our divine Parent. And in truth that special relationship never can be broken.

God never fails to love His child, the immortal spiritual manifestation of His own being. The Father Mind knows nothing less than the purity and goodness of His expression, and He includes all spiritual creation within the infinitude of divine consciousness. It is only the false and deceptive mentality of mortals that ever believes man can be forsaken by his Maker.

Thus it isn't God who needs to be reconciled to His own manifestation. Rather it is the faltering human consciousness, believing in man's vulnerability to separation, that needs the reconciliation—that needs to discern more of the truth of the real man's inseparability from God. And as the Christ, Truth, is welcomed into one's heart through prayer, the ever-present embrace of divine Love is felt in its radiant warmth and tenderness. This reconciliation through Christ makes one feel new and truly alive. The Bible assures us: "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:17, 18).

So the very act of being reconciled to God through Christ brings us healing and redemption, for as we gain a truer sense of infinite, omnipotent Love, we find release from the bondage of disease and sin. Yet reconciliation does require something of the individual. It may require more earnest prayer, humility, a willingness to accept God's will. It may demand genuine repentance followed by actions that prove our sincerity, devotion, and integrity. But what joy there is in meeting these Christian demands!

As in Jesus' day when our Master preached God's Word, healed the sick, raised the dead, and cast out evils, so in our own day the Christ is active in every searching thought, every humble heart, that yearns to know man's unity with the Father.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/reconciled-to-god-through-christ.