

Atonement - - Propitiation

What Do These Words Mean?

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Unfortunately, if you look on the internet for the definition of Propitiation or Atonement, this is what you'll find:

pro·pi·ti·a·tion

prə,piSHē'āSHēn/

noun

noun: propitiation; plural noun: propitiations

- 1 the action of propitiating or appeasing a god, spirit, or person."he lifted his hands in propitiation"
- atonement, especially that of Jesus Christ.

That definition is no help at all. It tells you that, "propitiation is the action of propitiating."

I've actually heard ministers say from the pulpit that even they "don't really know what that means."

And if the word means to "appease a god" – then that means that the Christian "god" is not much different from a pagan god – a "god" who needs to be appeased by a human sacrifice.

At-one-ment or At-one-with

The English word for atonement originally meant "at one-ment" or "at one with" like being in harmony with someone and in this case it means to be at one with God through the atonement that was made possible by the substitutionary death of Christ on our behalf.

The Hebrew Word for atonement is “kipur” with the verb form being “kaphar” and means “to cover, purge, make reconciliation” and “to cover with or coat with pitch.” That last definition is very interesting because the same Hebrew word used for pitch is “kaphar” and that is what the Ark was covered with. When God commanded [Noah to build an Ark](#) to save him, his family, and many of the animals from the coming judgment of the flood, he was commanded to cover the Ark with pitch or “kaphar” which is to cover, make reconciliation with, or to purge. Since the floodwaters were indicative of the judgment of God on fallen, sinful mankind, it is not ironic that God used the word “kaphar” in telling Noah to cover the Ark with pitch.

Thus, the Ark is seen as symbolic of God’s salvation and the atonement or covering from God’s judgment (of the floodwaters) as seen in the pitch that Noah applied to the outside of the Ark whereby God spared Noah and his family from the judgment of sin by an atoning, reconciling covering or cover that the pitch was known for. This is indicative of salvation being fully a work of God and not of man (Eph 2:8-9).

Atonement means Reconciliation

How much clearer it would be for everyone, if the word Reconciliation would be used, instead of atonement or propitiation. Everyone understands what it means for man to be reconciled with God, after the great separation between God and man caused by sin.

God promises, “Behold, I make ALL new.” Rev 21:5

Eventually, God will Reconcile and Restore to Himself **ALL** those He has created.

That’s why we believe in Universal Restoration (Reconciliation)!