Elenctic Theology

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*The Work of Christ – The Atonement: Part I*

## The Effects of Sin &

## the need for christ’s work

### The Effects of Sin

#### ***Defective Status***

##### Guilt (Jas. 2:10)

##### Alienation (Col. 1:21)

#### ***Defective Nature***

##### Corruption: The Heart & Concupiscence (Jer. 17:9)

##### 

### The Type of Work Required

#### ***Active Obedience***

#### ***Passive Obedience***

## the stages & states of christ’s work

### Preexistence

### State of Humiliation

#### ***Incarnation***

#### ***Active Obedience***

#### ***Passive Obedience***

#### ***Passion***

#### ***Death***

#### ***Descent into Hades***

### State of Exaltation

#### ***Resurrection***

#### ***Ascension***

#### ***Session***

#### ***Second Advent***

#### ***The Mediatorial Work***

#### ***Apocalypse***

## Salvation Accomplished: The Death of Christ

### The Eternal Plan of Redemption

#### The eternal plan of redemption is expressed by the biblical phrase: “the blood of an *eternal* covenant” (Heb. 13:20).

#### It is demonstrated by God’s *eternal* decree to provide salvation for man.

##### ***II Tim. 1:9***—“…who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus *from all eternity*,”

##### ***Acts 2:23***—Jesus was crucified by the *predetermined* and *foreordained* plan of God.

##### ***Rev. 13:8***

###### This verse can be translated to mean either that the Lamb was slain from foundation of the world or that our names were written in book of life from foundation of the world.

###### Either way the result comes out the same: the plan of salvation was not an afterthought; God was not caught off guard.

##### ***I Pet. 1:19-20***—The Lamb was foreknown before the foundation of the world.

##### ***Tit. 1:2***—God promised eternal salvation before time eternal.

#### ***Economic Trinitarianism & Salvation***The plan of salvation involved the agreement of the Persons of the Trinity to assume particular administrative roles or functions in saving mankind.

##### **The Father *Originated* the Plan of Salvation.**

###### ***Eph. 1:3-6***

###### ***1 Pet. 1:19-20***

##### **The Son *Provided* Salvation through His Substitutionary Death.**

###### ***2 Cor. 5:21***—He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

###### ***Eph. 1:7-12***—In Christ we have redemption.

###### ***Heb. 7:22***; ***10:5-10***

###### ***1 Pet. 2:24; 3:18***

###### ***Rev. 1:5***

##### **The Holy Spirit *Applies* Salvation to the Life of the Believer.**

###### ***Jn. 3:5***—Christians are “born of the Spirit..”

###### ***Eph. 1:13-14***—We are “sealed” by the Spirit.

###### ***Tit. 3:5***—He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.

##### **Berkhof’s Summary Statement**: “In the economy of redemption there is, in a sense, a division of labor: the Father is the originator, the Son is executor, and the Holy Spirit the applier….This can only be the result of a voluntary agreement among the persons of the Trinity….“[[1]](#footnote-1)

#### ***Some False Views that Deny the Eternal Plan of Redemption***

##### **Mormonism** “Predestination is the false doctrine that from all eternity God has ordained whatever comes to pass, having especial and particular reference to the salvation and damnation of souls.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

##### **Sun Myung Moon (Unification Church)** Jesus failed in his mission, which was to provide both physical and spiritual salvation. When God saw that Christ’s crucifixion was inevitable he put plan “B” in place: to die and provide spiritual salvation only. It remains for a second messiah (i.e., the Lord of the Second Advent—presumably Moon himself) to provide physical salvation by marrying a perfect wife and producing a race of perfect children.

##### **YWAM, H. Roy Elseth, Richard Rice, et al.** God doesn’t even know the future, and so couldn’t know for certain that Adam would sin and that redemption would be needed. Once he saw that it was needed, then he implemented the plan.

###### Statement by Rice on Acts 2:23: “Some biblical statements indicate that Christ’s enemies and executioners in the final analysis acted in harmony with God’s plan (Acts 2:23; 4:28). But this need not mean that their actions were predetermined and that they were simply doing what God planned and/or foresaw for them….”[[3]](#footnote-3)

###### Rice comments on the meaning of the expression, “slain from the foundation of the world”: “The original formulation of the plan from ‘the foundation of the world’ (1 Pet. 1:20) does not necessarily imply that the intrusion of sin in human affairs was a foregone conclusion. It only means that God had perfectly prepared for every possible development, including this most unfortunate one.”[[4]](#footnote-4)

### The Biblical Importance of Christ’s Atonement for Sin

#### ***Christ’s Death is Foreshadowed in Old Testament Prophecy.***

##### **It is Demonstrated in the Old Testament “Types.”**

###### ***Gen. 3:21—The animal or animals slain by God to provide coats of skin for Adam and Eve***

###### ***Gen. 8:20-22 cf. Eph. 5:2—The sweet smelling sacrifice offered by Noah***

###### ***Gen. 22:13-14 cf. Rom. 8:32—The ram offered by Abraham in place of Isaac on Mount Moriah***

###### ***Ex. 12:1-28 cf. 1 Cor. 5:7 —The Passover lamb first offered in Egypt***

Also see Isa. 53:7 (Christ a lamb led to slaughter)

Jn. 1:29 (Christ the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world)

1 Pet. 1:19 (precious blood of Christ the lamb)

###### ***Lev. 1-7—The Levitical sacrifices***

The Levitical sacrifices were instituted by God and not by man.

Heb. 9:9; 10:1, 4—These sacrifices of the OT could not bring spiritual cleansing.

1 Cor. 5:7—The sacrifices did point forward to the perfect and efficacious sacrifice of Christ.

Gen. 15:6 (“Abraham believed God”) cf. Rom. 3:25-26 (Christ an atoning sacrifice through *faith* in his blood); Heb. 11:4; 9:15 – These sacrifices needed to be accompanied by genuine faith from the offerer. Then on the basis of Christ’s future work, the believing offerer would be justified.

###### ***Lev. 16 (cf. Heb. 9:6-12, esp. vv. 7, 11-12)—The Day of Atonement***

##### **Christ’s Death is Described in the Old Testament.**

###### The main focal points of the OT prophetic Scriptures are the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, that is, Christ’s first and second advents (1 Pet. 1:10-11).

###### Ps. 22; Isa. 52:13-53:12—These prophetic passages emphasize the details of Christ’s death.

###### Ps. 16:10-11 (Christ’s body will not see decay) cf. Acts 2:27-28—These passages foretell Christ’s resurrection.

#### ***Christ’s Death is Prominent in the New Testament.***

##### The death of Christ is mentioned in the NT more than 175 times.

##### It is assumed and implied in many other instances.

##### We should emphasize what the Bible emphasizes: Christ’s death, resurrection and return.

#### ***Christ’s Death is the Purpose of the Incarnation.***

##### ***Mt. 20:28; Mk. 10:45***—The Son of Man came (incarnation) to give his life (death) a ransom (payment) for many.

##### ***Heb. 2:14***—Christ shares our humanity so that his death can destroy death and Satan.

##### ***1 Jn. 4:10***—God sent his Son to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

#### ***Christ’s Death is Seen in the Proclamation of the Gospel.*** The heart of Paul’s gospel was the death, burial and resurrection of Christ—1 Cor. 15:1-4.

#### ***Christ’s Death is Seen in the Provision for Salvation.*** Only Christ’s death provides salvation by grace through faith—Rom. 3:21-26.

### Erroneous Views of Christ’s Death

*The views discussed in this section are heterodox in their understanding of Christ’s work on the cross. However, it is important to know about them because they are still widely disseminated throughout the church.*

#### ***Accident Theory*** This is a modernist, rationalistic approach to the doctrine. Some Unitarian Universalists and others hold this doctrine. A low view of the inspiration and authority of Scripture is associated with this view. One must reject an abundance of biblical data to hold this view.

##### *Explanation* Christ died because of the general reaction of His contemporaries to His teachings and activities. While the death of Jesus Christ was unfortunate, His death has no special significance for anyone else. There was no eternal divine plan for Christ to die.

##### *Refutation*

###### Christ’s death was not accidental, but intentional and providentially decreed by the Father (Acts. 2:23) and volitionally determined by the Son (Matt. 27:50; Jn. 10:17-18; 19:30).

###### Christ could have avoided death had He desired to do so (Jn. 10:17- 18; Matt. 26:53).

###### This view denies the deity and authority of Christ as well as the authority of the Scriptures.

#### ***Moral Influence Theory*** This view was popularized by Peter Abelard (12th century) and was/is commonly held by modern-day liberalism.

##### *Explanation*

###### The incarnation, sufferings, and death of Christ are to soften human hearts and to lead them to repentance.

###### Christ’s death manifested the love of God and this should move men to do good (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

##### *Refutation*

###### It is true that love motivated the Father to send Christ to the cross for sinners (John 3:16), but He saves by His substitutionary sacrifice (penal substitution) and not by His example.

###### This theory denies that Christ’s sacrifice was propitious in relationship to God (Rom. 3:25) and substitutionary in relationship to man (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

###### It wrongly denies that God’s righteousness demanded the death of Christ if salvation was to be provided for sinful man (Acts 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:24; Rom. 3:25-26).

###### Love in Christ’s atoning work is demonstrated *through* penal substitution, not apart from it. “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:13).

#### ***Example Theory*** This theory was held by, e.g., Faustus Socinus in the 16th century.

##### *Explanation*

###### This theory is similar to the Moral Influence view. Socinus actually claimed Abelard as his inspiration.

###### Christ died as a martyr because He was faithful and dutiful towards the principles which He taught. We should learn from His example to be faithful and dutiful towards the truth. Simple repentance and reformation are sufficient for salvation. Substitutionary satisfaction (i.e., penal substitution) is not required.

###### Christ has made known to us the way of salvation, which we may achieve by imitating his example.

##### *Refutation*

###### This teaching denies the scriptural viewpoint of Christ’s person and work and the natural man’s condition of spiritual death and total depravity (2 Cor. 5:21; Eph. 2:1; Rom. 7:18).

###### It denies the necessity of personal regeneration for the salvation of the individual (Jn. 3:3, 5).

###### Biblically, Christ’s example is intended only for the *sanctification* of the believer, not for the *salvation* of the unbeliever (1 Pet. 2:21, 24).

#### ***Moral Government Theory*** This theory is associated with Hugo Grotius (17th century) and later the famous revivalist Charles G. Finney (19th century). It has been held more recently by some connected with Youth With a Mission (YWAM) and others.

##### *Explanation*

###### Christ’s death was not to satisfy the righteous demands of a holy God; rather it was required to show God’s displeasure over sin. Had God not shown his displeasure over sin, his creatures would have lost respect for him and his “moral government.” Once God made it clear that he was displeased with sin (i.e., through Christ’s death), God was then able to forgive freely, i.e., without any payment.

###### Christ did not suffer the equivalent penalty for the sins of the world, but God did accept what He did suffer as a substitute for our penalty.

###### This substituted suffering on the part of Christ moves men’s hearts to repentance which in turn brings forgiveness and secures salvation.

##### *Refutation*

###### The theory is illogical. If God wanted to demonstrate his displeasure against sin, he should have punished the worst sinner he could find in order to make an example out of him, rather than afflicting his most holy and innocent Son.

###### Christ’s death was a propitious sacrifice (Rom. 3:25).

###### Christ’s substitutionary suffering was an equivalent penalty to that penalty which all sinner deserved (Jn. 1:29; 1 Jn. 2:2). It is a payment, not something put in the place of a payment.

###### Christ’s death is not merely the means to move men to repentance, but it is the sole basis for man’s salvation. (See the earlier criticism of the moral influence theory.) Faith and repentance are always the means and never the basis for salvation.

#### ***Ransom to Satan Theory*** This view was held by some early church theologians and fathers, such as Origen, the Cappadocian Fathers, etc. It has also been revived in modern times by C. S. Lewis in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*.

##### *Explanation*

###### Christ’s death was a ransom paid to Satan who rightfully possessed man because of man’s sin. Satan was willing to exchange his human captives for Christ and His power. Satan was deceived and defeated by God being incarnated in Christ.

###### Hebrews 2:14-15 would be a biblical passage used in support of this view.

##### *Refutation*

###### While Satan does possess the unsaved in the spiritual sense of bondage and control (Jn. 8:44; Eph. 2:2; Col. 1:12-14), it is wrong to assume that man’s sin gives him a rightful possession of sinful man.

###### God does not owe Satan anything nor is God obligated in any way to pay Satan for claiming the human creatures which He (God) created in the first place.

###### The ransom price (redemption) of sin was not paid to Satan but offered as a satisfaction of God’s righteous demands.

###### Satan knew that Christ was the Son of God, and God’s purpose was not to deceive Satan but to defeat Satan through the work of Christ on the cross (Matt. 4:3; Heb. 2:14).

#### ***Christus Victor Theory***

##### *Explanation*

###### Some have suggested this is the “classic” view of the atonement held by many of the church fathers.

###### In this theory, Jesus Christ dies to defeat Satan and the powers of evil in order to free the human race from their bondage.

###### It is similar to the Ransom to Satan view in that its emphasis is defeating the Devil, but differs from the Ransom view in that there is no ransom or payment offered to the Devil.

###### Here, the cross was not a satisfaction or payment for sin, but was the means for defeating evil and liberating the human race.

##### *Refutation*

###### This view is reductionistic and incomplete.

###### Christ does defeat evil as an element of the atonement, but Christ defeats Satan and evil by means or penal substitution of a substitutionary sacrifice.

###### Colossians 2:13-15: “**13** When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, **14** having canceled out the *certificate of debt* consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having *nailed it to the cross*. **15** When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.”

###### See, *supra*, for additional refutations.[[5]](#footnote-5)

#### ***Born-Again Jesus Theory*** This theory is held by a number of teachers associated with the Word of Faith Movement.  Some of its main proponents are Joyce Meyer, Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth Copeland, and Fred Price.  It is similar to the Ransom to Satan theory.

##### *Explanation*

###### Similar to the Ransom theory, Christ’s death was a ransom paid to Satan who rightfully possessed man because of man’s sin and is, thus, “the god of this world.” However, Satan was willing to exchange his human captives for Christ and His power.

###### The Born-Again Jesus (BAJ) defines the Fall of Man as man’s exchange of natures from divine to demonic. Man begins as a “little god” before the Fall, but all men have a “satanic nature” after the fall. Thus the objective of Christ’s work becomes the restoration of man’s divine nature by having man exchange “spiritual fathers,” from Satan as father back to God as Father.  This is accomplished through the doctrine of “Identification” with Christ by nature.

###### The doctrine of Identification means an identification of natures in BAJ theology.  Satan, as a result of Adam’s “high treason,” became the legal owner of the earth and mankind.  If God was to redeem man, He must pay a just ransom to Satan—and that ransom was Jesus Christ, the Son of God.  However, for it to be “legal” (in BAJ theology) Jesus must become *exactly* like fallen mankind, that is, satanic in nature.  Thus, according to the BAJ theory, Jesus came to earth and on the cross, entered into the same spiritual condition as fallen man, namely spiritual death, which is defined as having Satan’s nature.

###### After Jesus dies spiritually, defined as losing His divine nature, receiving Satan’s nature, and sojourning in Hell to suffer for three days, it was necessary for Him to be “born-again,” defined as regaining His divine nature.  Once believers “vitally identify” with the Born-Again Jesus, they receive their new nature, a divine nature, becoming “little gods.”

###### John 3:14, II Cor. 5:21 and I Tim. 3:16 are representative of biblical passages some WF Proponents use to support this view.

##### *Refutation*

###### See refutations for the Ransom to Satan theory, *supra*.

###### The BAJ’s misunderstanding of Satan as “the god of this world” with a random properly due to him damages the “God-ward” aspect of the atonement.  The primary assertion of the doctrine of Identification in the BAJ theory is that Satan somehow owns humanity by “legal right” and, hence, a ransom must be paid to him if man is to be redeemed.  The BAJ concept of the atonement is “Satan-ward” and not “God-ward.”

###### Christ’s death was an offering to God, not to Satan.  Ephesians 5:2 says that Christ “gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice *to God* as a fragrant aroma.”

###### Jesus could not have been suffering in Hell for three days until resurrection because He said to the thief on the cross, “Today you shall be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

###### When Jesus died the veil of the temple was torn in two (Mt. 27:51), symbolizing the completion of the atonement and access to God.  Jesus did not have to go to the “pit of Hell” to complete the atonement.

###### Jesus did not “whup Satan” in Hell, He triumphed on the Cross.  Col. 2:15 states Christ “having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross” (NIV).

###### Peter says “He Himself bore our sins in His body *on the cross*, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed” (I Peter 2:24).

### Provisions of Christ’s Death The meaning and significance of Christ’s death is best seen by a presentation of its provisions, whereby a holy God can righteously save sinful man.

#### ***Substitution for Sinners***

##### ***Definition:*** Christ suffered God’s punishment of sin in the place of sinners.

##### ***Support***

###### Direct biblical statements affirming substitution

***Isa. 53:6, 10***—The LORD laid our iniquity on him.

***Mt. 20:28***—Christ gave his life a ransom for many

***Rom. 5:8***—While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

***2 Cor. 5:21***— God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

***1 Pet. 2:24***—He bore our sins in his body on the tree.

***1 Pet. 3:18***—Christ died once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God.

###### **The Significance of Greek Prepositions Involved**

Note the ambiguity in the English preposition “for.”

***Anti*** (ajnti**)**—clearly and consistently means “in place of” or “instead of.”

See e.g., Mt. 2:22; 5:38.

Therefore, when it is used in connection with Christ’s death (Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6), it teaches that Christ died as a substitutionary sacrifice for man’s sin.

***Huper* (**uJper)*—*Sometimes means *in place of*

See e.g., Jn. 11:50; Rom. 5:6-8; 2 Cor. 5:15, 21; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. 3:18).

Sometimes this preposition can mean *for the benefit of*.

See Philemon 13 for non-atonement substitutionary usage.

###### **The Old Testament Sacrificial System also Demonstrated Substitution.**

Lev. 1:4—The offerer laid his hand upon the head of the sacrificial animal to indicate the transfer of his sins to the offering.

Lev. 16:15-19—The goat that was slain pictured the substitutionary offering for sin.

Lev. 16:20-22—The sins of the people were confessed over the live goat, and he was sent into the wilderness to indicate that sins atoned for by the dead goat were borne away.

##### **The Results of Substitution**

###### ***It is a substituted punishment. Hence, we are no longer liable to punishment***.

It is important to make a distinction between *chastisement* and *punishment.*

*Chastisement* has the personal betterment of the offender in view. (See, e.g., Heb. 12:5-11.)

*Punishment,* on the other hand, is a consequence meted out to satisfy justice (Rom. 13:4).

God’s law threatens punishment for our disobedience. But now the threatenings of the law have been met because Christ bore our punishment for us.

The practical result: God does not punish us for our sins.

Rom. 8:1—No *condemnation* for those in Christ Jesus.

1 Pet. 2:24; Isa. 53:10—The penalty of sins for all men were borne in the person of Christ.

###### ***The Righteousness of Christ is Imputed to the Believers Rom. 3:22-26; 2 Cor. 5:21.***

#### ***Propitiation to God***

##### ***Definition:*** In biblical usage *propitiation* means that the sacrifice of Christ has satisfied God’s wrath against sin (Rom. 1:18; Eph. 2:3; 5:6) due to the demands of His holy character (1 Jn. 2:2). See also Rom. 1:18; Eph. 2:3; 5:6; 1 Jn. 2:2.

##### ***Relation to OT sacrifices***

###### OT sacrifices did not in themselves propitiate God.

###### The OT sacrifices did typify and point forward to the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

##### ***Greek Words Used***

###### *Hilasmos* (1 Jn. 2:2; 4:10)—Propitiation

###### *Hilaskomai* (Lk. 18:13; Heb. 2:17)—To propitiate

###### *Hilasterion* (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 9:5)—Propitiatory

##### **Other Words Used to Describe This Provision:**

###### ***Atonement***

The word “atonement” (Heb. *kippur*) is found only in Rom. 5:11 (KJV) in NT where it is translated from *katallage,* which is better rendered “reconciliation.”

The word “atonement” is “theologically flabby” because it is imprecise. That is, it merely indicates that God and man have patched up their differences but fails to specify how this occurs. (See the following discussion on “reconciliation,”on page 13.)

###### ***Satisfaction*** This word comes from the Latin (*satisfactio*) and is fundamentally equivalent to “propitiation.” It means that Christ satisfied the wrath of God.

##### **Results of Propitiation**

###### Through Christ’s work of propitiation, God has been propitiated or satisfied that the full penalty for sin has been paid (Isa. 53:10-11; Jn. 19:30).

###### God can now righteously:

Forgive the believer’s sin

Count the believer righteous

#### ***Redemption from Sin***

###### ***Definition***: Redemption involves the payment of a price to release a person from bondage.

###### See Col. 1:12-14 and cf. Jn. 8:34 with v. 36.

##### ***Terminology*** Three different Greek terms are used to express more fully the significance of the doctrine of redemption.

###### *Agorazo* (Matt. 13:44; 1 Cor. 6:20; 2 Pet. 2:1)—”To pay the ransom price.”

The means (Rev. 5:9)—God has purchased us by the blood of Christ.

The purpose (1 Cor. 6:20)—That believers might glorify God in their bodies.

###### *Exagorazo* (Gal. 3:13)—”To remove from the market place.”

###### *Lutron* (Matt. 20:28)—”To effect a full release.” Cf. John 8:36. The full price for sin has been paid by the Savior so that the believer is accepted in Christ and freed from the penalty of sin (Rom. 3:24-26; Eph. 1:6-7).

The means (Rom. 3:24 [*apolutrosis*]; 1 Tim. 2:6 [*antilutron*]; Heb. 9:12 [*lutrosis*]; 1 Pet. 1:18-19 [*lutroo*]—The substitutionary death of Christ.

The purpose (Tit. 2:14 [*lutroo*]—To purify and possess a people zealous of good deeds.

##### ***Summary:*** “Thus, the doctrine of redemption means that because of the shedding of the blood of Christ, believers have been purchased, removed from bondage, and liberated.”

#### ***Reconciliation for Man***

##### ***Definition***

###### Reconciliation in an *objective* sense means that through His death, Christ has changed man’s alienation from God so that he can now be saved.

###### Reconciliation in a *subjective* sense means that the believer in Christ has been changed from enmity against God to friendship and fellowship with God.

##### ***Terminology***

###### *Katalasso* (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18-20 cf. 1 Cor. 7:11)—To change or reconcile.

###### *Katallage* (Rom. 5:11)—Reconciliation.

###### *Apokatalasso* (Col. 1:20)—To reconcile completely or “to bring back to a former state of harmony.”

##### ***Operation***

###### Means of provision (Rom. 5:10-11; 2 Cor. 5:18,19; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, 22)—Through the blood of Christ’s cross.

###### Means of appropriation (Rom. 3-4; 5:1,17)—By faith.

##### ***The Object of Reconciliation***

###### Man is reconciled to God rather than God being reconciled to man. The Scriptures never speak of God being reconciled to man but always of man being reconciled to God. God never reconciles Himself to man since this would require the middle voice which does not occur in connection with reconciliation. God does reconcile man to Himself as seen in the active voice which does occur frequently with reconciliation. Also, man is spoken of as being reconciled to God, and this principle is seen in the passive voice with God as the agent acting upon and in behalf of man. Man is also spoken of as having “received the reconciliation” (Rom. 5:11).

###### God has been propitiated through Christ’s death rather than reconciled because of any enmity on His part, since God cannot sin (Jas. 1:13). Man has made himself an enemy towards God rather than God making Himself an enemy towards man. God’s holy and righteous character has been offended by man’s sin, and God needs to be propitiated or satisfied that the penalty of man’s sin has been paid for so that He can righteously reconcile man to Himself. God, not man, requires propitiation, and man, not God, requires reconciliation.

##### ***The Purpose of Reconciliation***

###### *Immediate purpose* (Col. 1:20 cf. Eph. 2:16-17)—To reconcile man to God and thereby establish peace in place of enmity.

###### *Ultimate purpose* (Col. 1:22)—”In order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach.”

1. Berkhof, p. 266. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bruce McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 588 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Richard Rice, *God’s Foreknowledge and Man’s Free Will* (Bethany, 1985), 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rice, *God’s Foreknowledge and Man’s Free Will,* 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/christus-victor/> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)