



## WHAT IS ATONEMENT?

- ◉ Atonement comes from 16<sup>th</sup> century English - literally means at-one-ment.
- ◉ God's act of dealing with the primary human problem of sin. Both OT and NT affirm that sin has broken the relationship between God and humankind.
- ◉ Process of reconciliation between God and human beings with the goal of righting a wrong (sin).
- ◉ In Christianity: how we talk about the salvific work of Jesus Christ.

## HOW IS ATONEMENT ACCOMPLISHED?

- ◉ God's work, not ours.
- ◉ How does God overcome the barrier of sin?
- ◉ How does God choose to be reconciled with us once more?
- ◉ When does God's saving work occur:
  - Incarnation?
  - Life & Ministry of Jesus?
  - Crucifixion?
  - Resurrection?

**Varieties of Atonement & Their Areas of Focus**  
 What act(s) of God through Jesus Christ caused humanity to be atoned to God?

<b>Incarnation</b>	<b>Life &amp; Teaching</b>	<b>Crucifixion</b>	<b>Resurrection</b>
Christus Victor Incarnational	Moral Exemplar Healing Servant Solidarity	Penalty Satisfaction / Substitution Last Scapegoat	Ransom Captive

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## GOALS OF OUR STUDY

- ◉ NOT to pick one atonement theory over the others
- ◉ But to have open hearts and minds, to see if one resonates with us more than others, and to explore why that may be.
- ◉ To deepen our understanding of what the Bible says about atonement and reconciliation between God and humanity, along with theologians, our creeds, and our hymns.
- ◉ To understand the importance of the entirety of the work in the person of Jesus Christ - from Bethlehem to Pentecost and beyond!

## 1 JOHN 2:1-2

<sup>1</sup>My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup>**and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.**

## INCARNATIONAL ATONEMENT

What effects could take place by an atonement theory that places the moment of atonement with the birth of Jesus, God-with-us, rather than his death? - Rev. Jeremy Smith



## INCARNATIONAL ATONEMENT

German theologian and biblical scholar Fredrick Schleiermacher proposes that reconciliation happened at Jesus' birth. Something about the way Jesus *is* invites us into ideal humanity, made possible simply because of the Incarnation. God becoming flesh atones humanity in that instant -what matters is that God became human.

## INCARNATIONAL ATONEMENT

Athanasius (296-373 CE) writes in *On the Incarnation*:  
 You know how it is when some great king enters a large city and dwells in one of its houses; because of his dwelling in that single house, the whole city is honored, and enemies and robbers cease to molest it. Even so is it with the King of all; He has come into our country and dwelt in one body amidst the many, and in consequence the designs of the enemy against mankind have been foiled and the corruption of death, which formerly held them in its power, has simply ceased to be. For the human race would have perished utterly had not the Lord and Savior of all the Son of God, come among us to put an end to death (Ch. 2, sec. 10).



## INCARNATION IN THE BIBLE

- ◉ Matthew 1:18-25
- ◉ Luke 2:25-32
- ◉ John 1:1-14



## RECAPITULATION THEORY

- ◉ **Christ succeeds where Adam failed**
- ◉ **1 Corinthians 15:45-49**
- ◉ **Romans 5:12-21**
- ◉ **Colossians 1:15**
- ◉ Early Christians teachers: Irenaeus & Athanasius
- ◉ Recapitulation teaches that Christ became human to heal mankind by perfectly uniting the human nature to the Divine Nature in His person. Through the Incarnation, Christ took on human nature, becoming the Second Adam, and entered into every stage of humanity, from infancy to adulthood, uniting it to God. He then suffered death to enter Hades and destroy it. After three days, He resurrected and completed His task by destroying death.

## RECAPITULATION THEORY

- ◉ By entering each of these stages and remaining perfectly obedient to the Father, Christ recapitulated every aspect of human nature. He said “Yes” where Adam said “No” and healed what Adam’s actions had damaged. This enables all of those who are willing to say yes to God to be perfectly united with the Holy Trinity through Christ’s person. In addition, by destroying death, Christ reversed the consequence of the fall (Darrell).
- ◉ Saint Gregory of Nazianzus said in the fourth century, “That which is not assumed is not healed, but that which is united to God is saved.”

## RECAPITULATION THEORY

- ◉ Mary as Theotokos vs Eve / Mary’s obedience vs Eve’s disobedience
- ◉ In other words human evolution goes from a downward bent to an upward bent because of Christ’s identification with humanity in all things. Christ reverses humanity’s course from disobedience to obedience (Raby).
- ◉ Athanasius relating to recapitulation is, “He, indeed, assumed humanity that we might become God.” Athanasius saw the work of Christ as “restoring” the divine nature to humanity that it had lost through the fall.

## RECAPITULATION

John Calvin:

*It cannot be doubted that when Adam lost his first estate he became alienated from God. Wherefore, although we grant that the image of God was not utterly effaced and destroyed in him, it was, however, so corrupted, that any thing which remains is fearful deformity; and, therefore, our deliverance begins with that renovation which we obtain from Christ, who is, therefore, called the second Adam, because he restores us to true and substantial integrity.*



## EASTERN ORTHODOX

The Orthodox do not treat the incarnation, the cross, and resurrection **as separate events** when explaining our salvation...We are saved by the person of Jesus Christ, not just by that one thing he did on the Cross. In baptism we are united to Christ's death and his resurrection, we receive the Holy Spirit and are incorporated into his Body (the Church).





## T.F. TORRANCE

He who is the eternal Son of God, of one being with the Father, is he who is now also man and the fact that the same person who is fully and truly God is now fully and truly man, means that his person is and constitutes in itself...the union of God and humanity... **In his one person, therefore, God and man, God and all humanity, are now irrevocably and eternally united. God and man can now no more be separated from one another in Christ than the person of Christ can be undone, or the incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection be reversed.**



WHERE DO WE SEE  
INCARNATIONAL  
ATONEMENT?



## NICENE CREED

- ◉ We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. **For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became truly human.** For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried...
- ◉ The Creed then proceeds to recount Christ's suffering, his death on the Cross, his third day resurrection, his ascension to heaven, and his future return in glory...it doesn't say "Christ came down from heaven, took on human flesh, then died on the Cross for our salvation" ...our salvation stems from a whole series of things that Jesus Christ did as the God-Man.

## HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING



Hark! The herald angels sing:  
 "Glory to the newborn King!  
 Peace on earth and mercy mild  
**God and sinners reconciled!"**  
 Joyful, all ye nations rise  
 Join the triumph of the skies  
 With the angelic host proclaim:  
 "Christ is born in Bethlehem"  
 Hark! The herald angels sing  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"



Christ by highest heav'n adored  
 Christ the everlasting Lord!  
 Late in time behold Him come  
 Offspring of the Virgin's womb  
 Veiled in flesh the Godhead see  
**Hail the incarnate Deity**  
 Pleased in flesh with us to dwell  
**Jesus, our Emmanuel**  
 Hark! The herald angels sing  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"



**Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!**  
 Hail the Son of Righteousness!  
 Light and life to all He brings  
 Ris'n with healing in His wings  
 Mild He lays His glory by  
**Born that we no more may die**  
**Born to raise us from the earth**  
**Born to give us second birth**  
 Hark! The herald angels sing  
 "Glory to the newborn King!"

## GO, TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN



Verse 3:

Down in a lowly manger  
Our humble Christ was born  
**And God sent us salvation**  
**That blessed Christmas morn**  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
Over the hills and everywhere  
Go, tell it on the mountain  
That Jesus Christ is born

## ON THIS DAY EARTH SHALL RING



On this day earth shall ring  
With the song children sing  
To the Lord, Christ our King,  
**Born on earth to save us;**  
**Him the Father gave us;**

## ON THIS DAY EARTH SHALL RING



On this day angels sing;  
With their song earth shall ring,  
Praising Christ, heaven's King,  
**Born on earth to save us;**  
**Peace and love He gave us.**

## INCARNATIONAL ATONEMENT

What difference does  
incarnational atonement make in  
the world?



# INCARNATION ATONEMENT

“Jesus became what we are  
so that we could become  
what he is.”

