

At-one-ment and Atonement

Part 2

Yesterday we considered the first 11 chapters of Volume 5. Today's study will consider the remainder of the book.

Study XII

THE SUBJECT OF THE ATONEMENT—MAN

Man is a created being, a living soul, that can die, but a resurrection is promised to bring them back to life again.

It is significant that the word atonement is used in the chapter title.

The subject of this chapter is the Ransom: the atonement for fallen man.

A correct understanding of atonement requires as a foundation a correct understanding of "what is man." The usual false concept of the immortal soul contradicts the atonement altogether. The nature of man is therefore treated at length from the Bible standpoint, and in harmony with the Ransom doctrine.

The terms *life*, *death*, *spirit*, *soul*, *hell* and *resurrection* are considered in great detail, citing dozens of Scriptures. These concepts are harmonized with the change of nature promised to the Church, as shown from the Scriptures to be an exception.

The concept of *spirit* as it relates to the power of life is shown to be in perfect harmony with the nature of man as well as the subjects treated in previous chapters.

Point (e) from list 1 is alluded to as well: the annulment of the death sentence. [E328-329 and E373]

Appropriately and consistently, the word at-one-ment does *not* occur in this chapter.

The main point of this chapter: To understand the work of atonement, it is necessary to understand the nature of man.

Study XIII

**HOPES FOR LIFE EVERLASTING AND
IMMORTALITY SECURED BY THE ATONEMENT**

Everlasting life is a gift made possible by the atonement, but it is a future prospect, reserved for those who achieve at-one-ment. Most of the 144,000 have already received that gift in the complete sense of the word, in the first resurrection.

This chapter is related to Chapter 12, but from a different standpoint.

This chapter examines the concepts of everlasting life and immortality as a *possibility*.

Atonement would make no sense if man had an immortal soul.

Immortality is the highest form of eternal life, but not all who gain eternal life will be immortal. Only the Little Flock is promised immortality.

The need for atonement due to sin relates again to point (e) from list 1.

The hope of life after death by a resurrection is tied to the atonement doctrine.

The hope of reconciliation with God (at-one-ment) is made possible by the ransom (atonement).

Other points from list 1 which are considered in this chapter include (a), (b) and (g).

The main point of this chapter: Life everlasting and immortality are a future hope, made possible by atonement, for all those who achieve at-one-ment. Immortality is promised only to the Church.

Study XIV
**THE NECESSITY FOR THE ATONEMENT—
THE CURSE**

“And there shall be no more curse.” Rev. 22:3

The curse is death, which came upon Adam, and was inherited by all his children. That curse will eventually be fully lifted.

A correct understanding of the curse is essential to understanding the atonement doctrine. The majority of this chapter is a detailed explanation of the curse and how it relates to the atonement.

The first paragraph provides an overview of the major points to be considered:

- (1) There was a specific point in time when the curse came upon mankind.
- (2) The curse is *not yet* lifted. This relates to point (d) on list 1.
- (3) The curse *will be* fully lifted by the *end* of the Millennium.

The next paragraph shows the fallacy of eternal torment, which is falsely taught to be the curse. The logic presented from the Bible is that the curse is not something in the future (after death) but that it is something in the present life – “the wrath of God.”

Several pages are devoted to a history of the human race, starting with Adam as a perfect man, and tracing the fall from that perfection, thus showing the reality of the curse and thus the need for both phases of removing the curse: atonement and at-one-ment.

Those who accept Christ during the Gospel Age are reckoned as having escaped from the wrath of God. (2 Pet. 1:4) The remainder of the race are still under the curse.

The permission of evil is shown to be beneficial for both the followers of Christ as well as for all mankind, though only the former appreciate this fact at the present time.

The lifting of the curse for the world of mankind is explained next, as taking place in the future.

The universal drawing of all mankind will be an invitation to participate in the Divine program which will lift the curse.

On page E418 the logical conclusion is stated thus: “The only hope for everlasting life lies in some power or way or agency through which two things can be accomplished: (1) The release of mankind from the death sentence inflicted by Justice; (2) the lifting up of mankind out of the degradation of sin and depravity to the conditions of absolute holiness and perfection from which he fell.” This relates to points (l) and (m) from list 1, and once again shows the distinction between (1) atonement and (2) at-one-ment.

God’s purpose is summarized in three points on page E419:

- (1) The Ransom is the method used to satisfy Justice, and provides the legal basis for removing the curse. This is atonement.

(2) The Church is selected during the Gospel Age for the purpose of sharing in “the fruit of his [i.e. Jesus’] sacrifice.” Note: the Church does not share in providing the ransom, but in the *fruits* of the ransom.

(3) The work of restitution is another way to describe the process which will result in actual human perfection. Thus the work of atonement will be complete when all who take advantage of the opportunity achieve full restitution [*anastasis*] and full at-one-ment with God.

These three points relate to (e), (f), (h), (l) and (m) on list 1.

The main point of this chapter: The curse is Adamic death. That curse will eventually be lifted from all who take advantage of atonement and thereby achieve at-one-ment.

Study XV
**“A RANSOM FOR ALL”
THE ONLY BASIS FOR AT-ONE-MENT**

The two terms: atonement and at-one-ment are used very carefully in this key chapter. At-one-ment is used four times (including the chapter title), while atonement is used five times.

The chapter title is significant, and shows the contrast between the two concepts: the Ransom (atonement) is the *basis* for at-one-ment. As we have already seen, this same contrast is presented consistently throughout Volume 5.

All the points from *list 1* are touched on in this chapter. For that reason more time will be devoted to this chapter compared to the others.

The chapter is introduced with the same Scripture used in the Flyleaf: 1 Tim. 2:5,6. *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”*

The opening comments reiterate the fact that at-one-ment is impossible without the Ransom. Details concerning the Ransom are given to support the reasoning behind this, summarized as follows:

- (1) The Ransom is the acceptable sacrifice for man’s sins which ultimately lifts the “curse” or annuls the death sentence upon the race. This is a requirement of Divine Justice.
- (2) Because all were condemned in Adam, Justice can be satisfied by the death of a perfect substitute: the man Christ Jesus. The Ransom is identified as the atonement-sacrifice.
- (3) The wise and logical choice of the “Firstborn of every creature” to be the Ransomer (the Logos) is explained, as well as the necessity for a change of nature from spiritual to human.
- (4) “The first step in the program” is shown to be Jehovah’s work of providing for the Ransom, by inviting the Logos to take the human nature *“for the suffering of death”* – the penalty against the race.

Several pages are devoted to the difference between “Ransom” and “Redeem” as correctly understood from the original Greek.

“Ransom” – the equal corresponding price – is associated with the work of atonement.

“Redeem” is so translated in the KJV from many different Greek words.

Sometimes the original Greek is associated with the thought of Ransom or purchase – giving the price of redemption.

At other times the Greek word is used with reference to the setting at liberty of the redeemed ones, their deliverance.

The context must be considered carefully to distinguish between atonement made possible by the price of redemption and at-one-ment which is the final result, full deliverance, made possible by the Ransom.

The Ransom-price is one thing, the loosing or deliverance is another. The time for deliverance is in the Millennium Kingdom.

The next section discusses the equal corresponding nature of the Ransom contrasted with the inharmony of the error of the eternal torment doctrine.

Justification in its various aspects is considered next.

Then follows several pages explaining 1 Cor. 7:23 "*Ye are bought with a price...*" Three main points are given:

(1) Jesus is the purchaser. Once the Ransom-price has been *paid*, he owns the race and is its master, ruler and father (i.e. life-giver, or the "Second Adam").

(2) The Ransom is paid to Divine Justice.

(3) The reason for the purchase is summarized as follows:

God's attributes are clearly manifested by this program.

Wisdom saw the benefits of the permission of evil.

God's Justice is shown to be unalterable.

God's Love arranged for the satisfaction of Justice.

God's Power is exercised by Christ in accomplishing the work of at-one-ment.

The Ransom is one thing, but restitution is another.

The Ransom-price was secured at Calvary.

Restitution is the work made possible by the Ransom, under the New Covenant.

The role of the Mediator is to bring the world of mankind back to perfection and to complete reconciliation with the Father.

This process of reconciliation is at-one-ment.

The spirit-begotten during the Gospel Age give up what the world of mankind will gain under the Kingdom administration: perfect human life.

Several pages are devoted to the distinction between ransom and pardon.

The Ransom satisfies Justice.

A pardon does not satisfy Justice, but overrules it. God's character does *not* permit a pardon of Adam's transgression.

The penalty of sin was death, not merely dying.

The scope of the Ransom is stated in 1 Tim. 2:4 “*Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*”

The Ransom provides a release for “*all men*” from the original penalty.

The Ransom provides an opportunity for all to come to an accurate knowledge of the Truth.

Each individual must obey the Kingdom rule under the New Covenant in order to attain human perfection and everlasting life. This is conditional.

This scripture does not teach “Universal Salvation” which falsely claims that God is obligated to bring all men to human perfection and everlasting life *unconditionally*. Such false thinking violates the Ransom doctrine.

The scripture: “*there is no other name whereby we must be saved*” applies to all the human race. (Acts 4:12)

All opponents will be destroyed. (Acts 3:22)

Satan will be fully bound during the Mediatorial phase of the Kingdom in order for mankind to have a full, fair, individual trial.

God’s will shall be accomplished on earth as it is in heaven. Three points follow:

- (1) It is God's will that all should be recovered from the Adamic curse, and brought to a knowledge of the truth.
- (2) It is the will of God that eternal life should be given to all the obedient.
- (3) It is equally the will of God that all the disobedient “*shall be destroyed from amongst the people.*”

Restitution is not instantaneous, but a process. Several pages are devoted to arguments both pro and con for restitution being gradual. With the correct thought in mind, at-one-ment is thus shown to be a process. Resitution and at-one-ment are essentially synonymous in their end results.

Under the Mediator, all mankind will be beyond the reach of Divine Justice until the end of the thousand years. All those who have attained to human perfection will be fully capable of standing before God, because they will then be at-one with Him.

This chapter closes with two important points:

- (1) An explanation of the substitutionary nature of the Ransom.
- (2) The fact that no other plan was possible.

The main point of this chapter: The Ransom is most important since it forms the basis for carrying out the Divine program. That program would not be possible without the Ransom. The end result is at-one-ment.

Study XVI
**THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION
OR AT-ONE-MENT**

The place of the Royal Priesthood in the Divine program is clearly shown in this closing chapter.

Membership is by invitation only. (Heb. 5:4,5)

The ministry of the Royal Priesthood is to effect reconciliation or at-one-ment. (Rom. 5:11)

It is our privilege to be *“ambassadors for Christ”* even at the present time. (2 Cor. 5:17-20)

Only the called ones respond and receive reconciliation or at-one-ment during the Gospel Age, for the purpose of becoming members of the Royal Priesthood.

This privilege differs from our work as part of that Royal Priesthood in the future, which will be to bring the human race to perfection and at-one-ment with God.

Those who are not called at the present time are either indifferent to the Gospel Message, or are opponents. The latter class is permitted to exist as a necessary contributor to the development of the New Creation. (Rom. 8:17; 2 Tim. 2:12,13) This opposition is essential to test the spirit-begotten, and also to qualify them to be part of the Mediator.

This chapter, and the book, close with two familiar scriptures:

“Take heed that no man take thy crown.” Rev. 3:11

“Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.” Rev. 2:10

Why these two scriptures?

They show the practical reason why we should study this subject.

Realizing that our standing now is probationary should prompt us to be faithful unto death.

If we have a genuine interest in the Divine program, the natural consequence will be an intense desire to see that program brought to fruition.

Our faithfulness, and subsequent receiving of the crown, is for the purpose of having the power and the authority to carry out the work of at-one-ment. Of course, we must know the details of the “ministry of reconciliation” if we are going to be God’s instruments in accomplishing reconciliation or at-one-ment.

Summary and Conclusions

There is no substitute for a complete and personal study of Volume 5. The main purpose of this overview was to, hopefully, be helpful to you as you go through Volume 5 in that personal study.

Here are the main points of each chapter:

Study I - A detailed overview of the sequence of the Divine Plan of Atonement, also divided topically.

Study II - God is the Author of the atonement.

Study III - Jesus, the mediator of the atonement, is God's firstborn.

Study IV - The man Christ Jesus was a perfect man, uncontaminated by sin, and therefore not under the Adamic curse.

Study V - Jesus was a perfect man, yet, his experiences allowed him to sympathize with fallen men. This qualifies him, in a practical way, to be the mediator.

Study VI - The Scriptures explain how, and why, Jesus was both David's Son and David's Lord.

Study VII - Jesus was the only perfect son of the man Adam.

Study VIII - The holy spirit is the power of God which is used in various ways to accomplish both atonement and at-one-ment.

Study IX - The holy spirit is not a person. It operates upon fallen humans during the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age in the process of at-one-ment.

Study X - The spirit of a sound mind is a result of the power of God working in the hearts and minds of His people.

Study XI - The Bible resolves all misunderstandings concerning the holy spirit that might be in the minds of some, due to common false teachings and wrong interpretations.

Study XII - To understand the work of atonement, it is necessary to understand the nature of man.

Study XIII - Life everlasting and immortality are a future hope, made possible by atonement, for all those who achieve at-one-ment. Immortality is promised only to the Church.

Study XIV - The curse is Adamic death. That curse will eventually be lifted from all who take advantage of atonement and thereby achieve at-one-ment.

Study XV - The Ransom is most important since it forms the basis for carrying out the Divine program. That program would not be possible without the Ransom. The end result is at-one-ment.

Study XVI - The place of the Royal Priesthood in the Divine program is clearly shown in this closing chapter.

Dear Brethren: When you study this subject, and Volume 5 in particular, try to examine not only the detailed content, but also the sequence, the flow, the logical connections of one chapter to the next, the distinction between atonement and at-one-ment, and finally, the grand result of the Divine Program of at-one-ment made possible by the atonement sacrifice of our Lord Jesus.

In closing, a familiar Scripture: *“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”* 2 Pet. 1:4

Do you want the Divine nature? If so, why do you want it? The main reason should be “to have the power and the authority to carry out the work of at-one-ment.” That is why our heavenly Father wants us to be part of His Divine family, to accomplish this grand design.

May we all be faithful unto death that the Great Mediator can begin to function and bring the long-awaited blessings to all the families of the earth.

Amen!