

**Linguistic Notes from the Weekly Bible Lesson**

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**Subject: Doctrine of Atonement**

**Hebrew:** <sup>KJV</sup> **Isaiah 43:3** For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy **ransom**, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.<sup>1</sup>

כִּפֶּר kopher {ko'-fer} make an atonement, reconcile, purge. In the historical context of Isaiah 43, the flower of Jerusalem was captive in Babylon, and the poet is offering assurance that as in the past, so in the present, they would be delivered. The city of Babylon had been entered and taken without resistance by Cyrus. His policy was to allow tributary peoples to live in their land, and to a large extent live according to their own law and gods. The prophets believed the exile was precipitated by the sins of the people of Judah. But now their sins are redeemed. The rebuilding of Jerusalem was on the horizon. The exilic community was only a small nation defeated by imperial giants and in trouble with their God. "It was necessary to explain rather that their God, Yahweh, was not defeated but victorious, that he remained in sovereign control of the world that he had created and ruled since the beginning."<sup>2</sup> But also, there is a tension between the universal character of God, the creator of all, and the redemption of one party by another. This apparent ethical conundrum can only be resolved with a vision of one infinite Mind and its infinite manifestation, in which there is no evil, sin, disease or death.

**Greek:** <sup>KJV</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:20** Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, **be ye reconciled to God.**<sup>3</sup>

<sup>TNT</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:20** Now then are we messengers in the roume of Christ: even as though God did beseche you thorow vs: So praye we you in Christes stede **that ye be atone with God:**<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <sup>R95</sup> **Isaiah 43:3** Porque yo, Jehová, Dios tuyo, el Santo de Israel, soy tu Salvador; a Egipto he dado por tu **rescate**, a Etiopía y a Seba a cambio de ti.

<sup>2</sup> David Noel Freedman. "The Earliest Bible" (1983) *Divine Commitment and Human Obligation* Ed. John R. Huddleston Grand Rapids,MI, Cambridge UK: William B. Eerdmans, 1997, 348.

<sup>3</sup> <sup>R95</sup> **2 Corinthians 5:20** Así que, somos embajadores en nombre de Cristo, como si Dios rogara por medio de nosotros; os rogamos en nombre de Cristo: **Reconciliaos** con Dios.

**καταλλάσσω** *reconcile*

William Tyndale was the English translator whose talents made of him a martyr of the English Reformation. Nevertheless, his translations were so skilled that much of his work survives in KJV and remains the bedrock of English translations. Tyndale actually invented the word “at-one-ment” in Christian Theology, equivalent to Hebrew **kopher**. In the first phrase of Tyndale is an archaism. Where modern English would say “we are ambassadors for Christ” Old English would use “in the room of Christ”. Spelling at that time simply imitates how a word sounded, so instead of “room” Tyndale wrote “roume”. Likewise, in the next phrase, KJV “through” is a standardized spelling, but Tyndale renders it phonetically “thorow”, and “vs” is equivalent to “us”. Finally, Tyndale made up the word – “be at-one with God.” In a way, Tyndale’s brilliance shows in the directness of his simple word.

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<sup>4</sup> “The guerdon of meritorious faith or trustworthiness rests on being willing to work alone with God and for Him, -- willing to suffer patiently for error until all error is destroyed and His rod and His staff comfort you.” Mary Baker Eddy, *Prose Works*, “Miscellaneous Writings”, (Boston: CSPS, 1896) 118.

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