

Student's Bible Lesson Review

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Designed for those in High School and beyond

Doctrine of Atonement

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Definitions from *Dictionary.com*

doctrine – noun particular principle or position that is taught **creed**: belief, principle, doctrine
atonement – noun 1. satisfaction or reparation for a wrong or injury; amends. 2. *Theology*. the doctrine concerning the reconciliation of God and humankind, especially as accomplished through the life, suffering, and death of Christ. 3. *Christian Science*. the experience of humankind's unity with God exemplified by Jesus Christ.
sacrifice: verb; noun 1. the offering of animal, plant, or human life or of some material possession to a deity, as in propitiation or homage. 2. the person, animal, or thing so offered.
3. the surrender or destruction of something prized or desirable for the sake of something considered as having a higher or more pressing claim.
The Hebrew word for sacrifice, *korban*, comes from the root *korav* meaning to "come close," specifically, to come close to God. The offering was meant to bring someone who was far near once again.

1. Consider this statement:

to all mankind and in every hour, divine Love supplies all good.

S&H 494:13 to

Could it be a statement – a summary of the teachings of Christian Science?

2. Where in our textbook would we find six statements that summarize the teaching of Christian Science? ([S&H 496:31-27](#)) Let's turn to them. To introduce these six statements, Mary Baker Eddy poses a question and then answers it for us:

Question. – Have Christian Scientists any religious creed?

Answer. – They have not, if by that term is meant doctrinal beliefs. The following is a brief exposition of the important points, or religious tenets, of Christian Science: S&H 496:28-2

3. What is a creed? (See dictionary excerpt above)
4. "Creed" is a word similar to "doctrine." People in some Christian churches (as part of their Sunday worship service) repeat together a creed – a statement of their beliefs about God, Christ Jesus, man, and the "after-life." (Trick question: **Is** there an "after-life"? No, there's only an "Always life"!!)
5. Today, we will specifically study the 4th and 5th tenets of Christian Science. These tenets address very important parts of Jesus' ministry. Understanding the context for Jesus' work for mankind is important. He was a Jewish man, 30 years old when he began his ministry. He was trained in the Jewish concept of atonement. What had he been taught (along with others of his time and religion) that must one do to atone for wrong-doing – to "get right with" God?

6. In order to fully answer that last question, we may need to consider another point - sacrifice. (See the box above for the definition.)

7.

Rabbi and priest taught the Mosaic law, which said: "An eye for an eye," and "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Not so did Jesus, the new executor for God, present the divine law of Love, which blesses even those that curse it.

As the individual ideal of Truth, Christ Jesus came to rebuke rabbinical error and all sin, sickness, and death, — to point out the way of Truth and Life. This ideal was demonstrated throughout the whole earthly career of Jesus, showing the difference between the offspring of Soul and of material sense, of Truth and of error. S&H 30:14-3 (spacing edited)

8. The Jews of our time don't view the requirements necessary to follow God's law in exactly the same way as what was taught and practiced in Jesus' time.

Thought has progressed since Jesus' time, due in large part to his ministry to enlarge mankind's understanding of God and Jesus' example of how to better worship Him. Here is a statement from a current Jewish scholar.

Jewish teachings about animal sacrifice as practiced in the Hebrew temple: One of the most common misconceptions deals with the word "sacrifice." We often think of sacrifices in the Temple in terms of buying off an angry deity with lots of blood and guts. Alas, these pagan ideas show how much our thinking has been influenced by other cultures. God is not lacking anything and does not need our sacrifices -- animal or any other kind. The offerings that were brought in the Temple, like all the commandments, were not done for God. They were done for us. by Rabbi Shmuel Silinsky

9. What is the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection?

10. Why is it important to Christians?

11. How is sacrifice connected to the events that happened during what the Christian world refers to as Good Friday and Easter Sunday?

12. It is said that Jesus, as "the Lamb of God," was the ultimate sacrifice. Do you believe this? _____

13. Is there something you need to sacrifice to feel closer to God?

14. God speaks to the pure in thought - it's the innocence in thought that allows a person to hear God. The purpose of sacrifice is to return the person to his innocence, to make amends for wrong done, and therefore, to enable him to come close to God.

15. Mary Baker Eddy helps us understand the true nature of sacrifice. It is a holy (unselfish) act that we are learning how to do better.

We know that a desire for holiness is requisite in order to gain holiness; *but if we desire holiness above all else, we shall sacrifice everything for it.* We must be willing to do this, that we may walk securely in the only practical road to holiness. S&H 11:22

Every pang of repentance and suffering, every effort for reform, every good thought and deed, will help us to understand Jesus' atonement for sin and aid its efficacy; but if the sinner continues to pray and repent, sin and be sorry, he has little part in the atonement, — in the at-one-ment with God, — for he lacks the practical repentance, which reforms the heart and enables man to do the will of wisdom. S&H 19:17-24

16. So, sacrifice begins with a desire for holiness, a willingness to let go of anything separating us from God (last week we recognized that to be the nature of sin).

17. What was Gethsemane? It was the place where Jesus _____. In her definition of *Gethsemane* in the Glossary of Science and Health, Mary Baker Eddy teaches us what is necessary for that desire to be manifested – “the human yielding to the divine; love meeting no response, but still remaining love.” (S&H 586:23)
18. What did Christ Jesus sacrifice?
19. Jesus sacrificed anger, self-righteousness, and criticism — even when he was so cruelly and unjustly treated. In summary, Jesus sacrificed “self” to help us understand the true nature of atonement, or as Mary Baker Eddy calls it, “at-one-ment.”
20. Christian Science offers us the highest sense of atoning as it teaches our at-one-ment with God. That’s the greatest creed there could ever be.
21. There is a way you can tell if you need to atone for error or be reconciled to someone. Are you able to think of the situation without cringing? Can you look the person whom you’ve offended in the eye with ease and joy? If the answer to either one of those two questions is “no,” then that dis-ease is an indication that you are feeling a deep need for reconciliation. Self-righteousness, self-pity, and anger won’t bring you satisfaction — reconciliation will.
22. God is Love. Could anger ever bring us closer to Love? _____ We must get rid of anger or hate-filled thoughts before we can express unity with God. Christ Jesus knew that he (and you and I) are “at one” with God as God’s reflection and he expected us to follow him – to do good works, to help and teach each other, to seek reconciliation when needed, to forgive, to (in other words) live our love! Live God’s love!
23. Let’s be clear on an important point. Giving up anger or envy is not sacrifice; it is obedience. Giving up self-will behind anger or envy or giving time to help someone else: that is sacrifice. The material sense of sacrifice requires us to give up some thing precious to prove to God that we are sorry for (and repent for) thoughts and deeds of selfishness or thoughtlessness. “Wait, and love more for every hate, and fear no ill,—since God is good, and loss is gain.” (MB Eddy from Hymn 207)
24. Are you willing to let go of anger, self-righteousness, criticism, even though they may seem justified and your friends may tell you that you have a right to them?
25. The Bible teaches of Jesus’ purpose — to be the light of the world. Doesn’t it teach you that you have a right to light, not to darkness? Anger and other reactive emotions are of darkness, and not from the light of God’s love.

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. . . I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.
John 12:44, 46

26. God endows man with a beautiful quality that enables him to practice “self”-sacrifice – grace. Grace lights up thought so that you can see the truth of is going on and can see God’s perfect plan for you so that you can joyfully lay aside every false belief about you and others. This is our part. Jesus may be best known for his resurrection and ascension. What does our textbook teach about their purpose?

In his resurrection and ascension, Jesus showed that a mortal man is not the real essence of manhood, and that this unreal material mortality disappears in presence of the reality.
S&H 292:31

27. What did you find out about sacrifice that may be of use to your spiritual growth?