

## Concluding Definitions

**Antichrist** – The word antichrist may mean either an enemy of Christ or one who usurps Christ's name and rights. The word is found in only four verses of Scripture (1 John 2:18, 22; 4-3; 2 John 7), but the concept appears throughout Scripture. It is evident from the way John and Paul refer to the Antichrist that they took for granted a tradition well known at the time (2 Thess 2:6; 1 John 4:3).

The OT gives evidence of a belief in a hostile person or power who in the end time will bring an attack against God's people – an attack that will be crushed by the Lord or his Messiah (Ps 2; Ezek 38-39; Zech 12-14). Paul gives us a very full description of the working of Antichrist, "the man of lawlessness" (2 Thess 2:1-12). He will oppose and exalt himself above God, actually sitting in the temple and claiming to be God. John shows that the coming of the Antichrist was an event generally expected by the church (1 John 2:18).

The beast of Revelation 17:8 recalls the horned beast of Daniel 7-8. He claims and is accorded divine homage and makes war on God's people. For a period of three and one-half years he rules over the earth and is finally destroyed by the Lord in a great battle. With his defeat the contest of good and evil comes to its final decision.

**Atonement** – The root meaning in English, "reparation", leads to the secondary meaning of reconciliation, or "at-one-ment", the bringing together into harmony of those who have been separated, enemies.

In Christian theology, atonement is the central doctrine of faith and can properly include all that Jesus accomplished for us on the cross. It was a vicarious (substitutionary) atonement. On the Day of Atonement, the goat that was substituted was in some sense not as valuable as a person, though the goat had never sinned; but God in his matchless grace provided a Substitute who was *infinitely* better than the sinner, absolutely sinless and holy, and dearer to the Father than all creation. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23) and "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).

There are two opposite facts that the ingenuity of the theologians could not have reconciled without God's solution: First, that God is holy and he hates sin, and that, by his holy law, sin is a capital crime; and second, that "God is love" (1 John 4:8). So the problem was, "How can God be just and at the same time justify the sinner?" (cf. Rom 3:26). John 3:16 tells us that God so loved the world that he gave his Son. In the eternal counsels of the Trinity, Jesus offered himself to bear our sins (Rev 13:8). He voluntarily emptied himself of the divine trappings of omnipotence, omniscience, and glory (Phil 2:5-8), that he might be truly human. He perfectly fulfilled the law on our behalf (Matt 5:18) and then paid the penalty for our sins in his death for us on the cross. Our Lord's work of atonement looks in three directions: toward sin (1 Peter 1:18-19), toward us (Rom 5:6-11), and toward the Holy Father (1 John 2:1).

**Blasphemy** – To reproach or to bring a railing accusation against any one is bad enough (Jude 9), but to speak lightly or carelessly of God is a mortal sin. The third commandment, "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God" (Exod 20:7), was observed so meticulously by the Jews that they would not speak the sacred name (Jehovah) at all, and so no one knows today for certain how it was pronounced.

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**Christian** – The biblical meaning is “adherent of Christ”. The disciples were formally called Christians first in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Agrippa recognized that to believe what Paul preached would make him a Christian (26:28). Peter accepted the name as in itself a basis for persecution (1 Peter 4:16). The apostles wrote of themselves as servants (slaves) of Christ (Rom 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1; Rev 1:1).

**Day of Atonement** – The Jewish feast of Yom Kippur, the tenth day of the seventh month (Sept.), the only day the high priest entered the Holy of Holies. It was a day of fasting, penitence, sacrifice for the whole nation, and abstinence from labor (Lev 16; Heb 9:1-10; 25).

The purpose of the Day of Atonement seems to have been at least fourfold: first, to show God’s hatred of sin; second, to show the contagious nature of sin; third, to point forward by three types to the death of “the Lamb of God”, our blessed Savior; and fourth, by its repetition year after year to signify that the way into the very presence of God had not been made manifest before the death of Christ (Heb 9:7-9). When our Lord offered himself on Calvary, the veil of the temple was torn (Mark 15:38), signifying that from that moment on we were under a new covenant—a covenant of grace. The OT ceremonies were but symbols and types and shadows: the NT records the realities. Today, under grace, we look back to Calvary, when the great Day of Atonement took place once for all.

**Hell** – The real existence of hell is irrefutably taught in Scripture as both a place of the wicked and a condition of retribution for the unredeemed (e.g., Ezek 3:18; Dan 12:2). The nature of hell is indicated by the repeated reference to eternal punishment (Matt 25:46), eternal fire (18:8, Jude 7), everlasting chains (Jude 6), the pit of the Abyss (Rev 21:8), eternal destruction from the face of God (2 Thess 1:9), and eternal sin (Mark 3:29). Three basic ideas are associated with the concept of hell: absence of righteousness (Mark 3:29), separation from God (John 3:36), and judgment (Matt 8:12; 25:31-46).

**Justification** – “that judicial act of God by which, on the basis of the meritorious work of Christ, imputed to the sinner and received through faith, God declares the sinner absolved from sin, released from its penalty, and restored as righteous”. It is being placed by God in a right relationship with himself.

**Omnipotence** – The attribute of God that describes his ability to do whatever he wills. God’s will is limited by his nature, and he therefore cannot do anything contrary to his nature as God, such as to ignore sin, to sin, or to do something absurd or self-contradictory. God is not controlled by his power but has complete control over it: otherwise he would not be a free being (Job 42:2; Jer 32:17; Matt 19:26; Luke 1:37; Rev 19:6).

**Omnipresence** – The attribute of God by virtue of which he fills the universe in all its parts and is present everywhere at once. Not a part, but the whole of God is present in every place. The Bible teaches the omnipresence of God (Ps 139:7-12; Jer 23:23-24; Acts 17:27-28). This is true of all three members of the Trinity. They are so closely related that where one is the others can be said to be also (John 14:9-11).

**Omniscience** – The attribute by which God perfectly and eternally knows all things that can be known—past, present, and future. God knows how best to attain his desired ends. God’s omniscience is clearly taught in Scripture (Ps 147:5; Prov 15:11; Isa 46:10).

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**Righteousness** – The Lord God always acts in righteousness (Ps 89:14; Jer 9:24). That is, he always has a right relationship with people, and his action is to maintain that relationship. Righteousness means a right relationship with both God and one’s fellow human beings (Matt 5:6, 17-20; Luke 18:14).

**Salvation** – In the NT, Jesus is portrayed as the Savior of sinners (Luke 2:11; John 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Phil 3:20; 2 Peter 1:1, 11; 1 John 4:14). The title reserved for God in the OT is transferred to Jesus. When a person repented and believed, that person received salvation (Mark 2:5; Luke 7:50; 19:9-10). Because of the life, death, and exaltation of Jesus, salvation is a present reality. It is deliverance from the dominion of sin and Satan; it is freedom to love and serve God now (Acts 4:12; 2 Cor 6:2; Heb 2:3), Salvation is also, however, a future hope (Rom 5:9; 1 Peter 1:5; Rev 19:1).

**Sanctification** – The process or result of being made holy. Holiness when applied to things, places, and people means that they are consecrated and set apart for the use of God. When used of people, it can have a moral dimension. Thus in the NT, believers are described as already (objectively) sanctified in Christ (1 Cor 1:2, 30). Believers are called to show that consecration in their lives (1 Thes 4:3; 5:23; Heb 2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12). They are to be holy in practice in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Propitiation and expiation** – KJV uses the word *propitiation* three times—“God set forth [Christ] to be a propitiation” (Rom 3:25); “[Christ] is the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:2); “God... sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (4:10)—and NASB uses it a fourth time—“[Christ became a man] to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb 2:17)—in all of which RSV and NEB use *expiation* and NIV has either *sacrifice of atonement* or *atonement sacrifice*.

*Propitiation* and *expiation* are not synonyms; they are very different in meaning. Propitiation is something done to a person: Christ propitiated God in the sense that he turned God’s wrath away from guilty sinners by enduring that wrath himself in the isolation of Calvary. Expiation is what is done to crimes or sins or evil deeds: Jesus provided the means to cancel, or cleanse, them.

**Unpardonable Sin** – Not a phrase used in the Bible, but the usual way of referring to blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Matt 12:31-32; Mark 3:28-29; Luke 12:10). There is much difference of opinion as to the meaning of this sin, but one of the most popular and likely views is that the sin involves decisively and finally rejecting the testimony of the Holy Spirit regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ.

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