

Redemption and Atonement

Isaiah 53:1-12 Romans 3:21-28 Luke 21:8-18

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There are a handful of *significant milestone events* in Church history that stand out. Perhaps the first was the **Jerusalem Council** recorded in Acts 15. False teachers were teaching that you had to be circumcised and obey the Law of Moses in order to be saved. It created a huge controversy in the early Church. So the Apostles, Peter, Paul, and James, the brother of Jesus, gathered the leaders of the church together, and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, renounced the false teachers, and confessed: *“We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved!”* ACTS 15:11. The Church has never looked back...salvation is always and only by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Another *significant milestone event* in Church history was the **Edict of Milan in 313AD**. Roman Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity, and he gave Christianity legal status. *Christianity went from the outlawed religion to the official religion of the Roman Empire*. All the vicious persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire came to an end with the Edict of Milan.

One *significant milestone event* that effects all of us happened 487 years ago **TODAY**. It was the reading of the **Augsburg Confession in 1530AD** in front of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.

The **Augsburg Confession**¹ was the name of the first Lutheran document that publically stated what Lutherans believe, teach and confess. By reading it before the Holy Roman Emperor, they were fulfilling Jesus’ words: *you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name*. LUKE 21:12

¹ If you would like to see and read the **Augsburg Confession**, please go to this link: <http://www.stpls.com/uploads/4/4/8/0/44802893/augsburg-confession.pdf> It is an easy reading document, and well worth your time. (I can email it to you also!)

The **Augsburg Confession** solidified the Lutherans around a common confession of faith. It marks the “official” beginning of the Lutheran Church. After the reading of the **Augsburg Confession** in front of the emperor, the Lutheran reformers never looked back.

The **Augsburg Confession** teaches the same truth that the Book of Romans confesses: **that we are saved by grace through faith alone in Jesus Christ.**

For we hold that one is **justified by faith** apart from works of the law. ROMANS 3:28

[Lutherans] they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but **are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith**, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by His death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight.
AUGSBURG CONFESSION, ARTICLE IV: OF JUSTIFICATION.

We learn from Holy Scriptures that we are unrighteous and we deserve to die in our sin and face the wrath of God. There is no way we can help ourselves; we have no strength, merit, or work to offer God. Sin poisons us within and corrupts all that we do. Here is how St. Paul summarizes it:

There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, **for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God** ROMANS 3:22-23

**If we are to be saved,
it is only by God’s goodness, grace, and mercy.**

In the book of Romans, St. Paul gives us **TWO WORD PICTURES** to help us better understand righteousness and salvation. Here is the first word picture:

We are justified by His grace as a gift, through the **redemption** that is in Christ Jesus ROMANS 3:24

Redemption is an **economic word picture** that teaches us that a price was paid for your salvation. You have been “**redeemed**” by the blood of Christ. The shedding of Jesus’ blood on the cross was the **price** that was paid for your sins. His death is the **ransom** God paid for you. Jesus shed His blood once, and for all people, including you. **Jesus shed His blood so that you do not have to shed your blood; you do not have to suffer and die for your sins; you don’t have to pay a price for your eternal salvation; Jesus already paid it for you.** He **paid the price** that you were unable to pay with His innocent suffering and death.

Redemption also means that **because** Jesus paid the price for you, you are set free. You are no longer a captive to sin, nor are you a prisoner to guilt. You have been set free from sin, guilt and even death itself. **You belong to God. You have been Redeemed!** Your entire life is now lived in freedom.

- † You are free to obey God and His Word.
- † You are free to be patient and kind to others as you love your neighbor as yourself.
- † You are free to worship the Lord and serve Him in all that you do!

REDEMPTION is a word picture that St. Paul uses in the book of Romans to help us better understand salvation. Redemption means that a price has been paid for you: that price was Christ's death on the cross! You are now free to live as a disciple of the Lord Jesus! You belong to the Lord; you have been redeemed! And, you live in His Kingdom!

A **second word picture** that St. Paul uses in the Book of Romans to teach us about God's grace and salvation is "**Atonement**". Atonement is a liturgical word that comes out of the Old Testament worship practices.

God put Christ Jesus forward as a **sacrifice of atonement by his blood**, to be received by faith.
ROMANS 3:25

Atonement is a liturgical word that comes out of the Old Testament worship practices. Specifically, it is from the "Day of Atonement", when the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies and sprinkle **the blood of the sacrifice** on the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Covenant was like a "treasure chest" where God physically dwelt on earth. Inside the Ark of the Covenant were the 10 Commandments which represented the sins of the people. The blood of the sacrifice was actually sprinkled on the ark by the High Priest -- "**covering over**" the sins represented by the 10 Commandments. That "**covering over**" was called "**atonement**".

Jesus is now our sacrifice – not lambs, bulls, nor goats. Jesus shed His blood when He died on the cross and His blood "**covers over**" your sins. Shedding His blood on the cross is how Jesus "**makes atonement**" for you. He is your sacrifice. In fact, He is the only sacrifice God will accept on your behalf. The word picture is that when God looks at you, He does not see your sins, but He sees the blood of the sacrifice that "**covers over you**". Your sins have been dealt with by Jesus, and you are now accepted by God through faith. You are **reconciled** with God; you have **peace** with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

ATONEMENT is a word picture that St. Paul uses in the book of Romans to help us better understand salvation. Atonement means that your sins are covered over by the blood of Jesus when He died on the cross. You now have peace with God and a restored relationship with Him.

Now that you are redeemed, and your sins have been atoned for by Christ, you live a holy life in God's kingdom. You belong to the Lord, a price has been paid to redeem you, and a sacrifice has been made to cover over your sins! This transforms you and changes everything about you!

You see this transformation in the Lutheran Reformation. The Lutheran reformers risked life and limb when they stood before the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. He could have arrested them all, imprisoned them, sent them to the Inquisition, or burned them all at the stake. Those early Lutheran reformers were transformed men; the Good News of Jesus had given them boldness and courage to confess and live the true faith --- even in the face of great danger and even death itself.

The same Gospel transforms you as well. You have been redeemed, and your sins have been atoned for by Christ. In faith, you change. You are transformed. Your focus is on Christ and His kingdom. You strive to live a courageous Christian life and boldly confess the Christian faith in every area of your life. You care about God's Word, His will, His kingdom. You hallow His name. **The Gospel transforms your life! Has it transformed you?**

487 years ago **today**, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of His redemption and atonement made the first Lutheran Reformers bold and courageous in faith and life. They confessed their faith in the word of the Augsburg Confession in front of the Holy Roman Emperor. That same Gospel, Christ's redemption and atonement, transforms you and makes you bold and courageous in your Christian faith and life. Amen!

The Augsburg Confession

The Augsburg Confession was presented to Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, at the Diet of Augsburg on June 25, 1530. The Augsburg Confession was the explanation of Lutheran teaching. The Augsburg Confession consists of twenty-eight articles of faith of the Lutheran Church. The Augsburg Confession remains one of the most influential documents to come out of the Lutheran Reformation. *Email Pastor and he can send you a copy if you would like to read it or see it online at <http://www.bookofconcord.org>.*