Three Perspectives on the Atonement
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Romans 5:10-11 in William Tyndale's English Translation of the New Testament, 1526

In William Tyndale's 1526 version of the New Testament, he gave an English translation of Romans 5:10-11 as follows:

> For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son: much more, seeing we are reconciled, we shall be preserved by his life. Not only so, but we also joy in God by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received this atonement.

Like many others of Tyndale's memorable translations of scriptural phrases, this version became the basis for the historically dominant rendering of the text into English.[1] In the English Bible, "atonement" is "the single word of Anglo-Saxon origin that describes a theological doctrine; other doctrinal words come from Latin, Hebrew, or Greek."[2]

Tyndale's use of the term "atonement" in his Bible translation was consistent with his theological view that the central mission of Jesus was:[3]

> "… to make us one with God: "One God, one Mediatour, that is to say aduocate, intercessor, or an atonemaker, between God and man." "One mediatour Christ, … and by that word understand an atonnemaker, a peacemaker."

Gallagher further explains:[4]

> The original meaning also comes through in the various early Bible commentators. Note Udal's comment on Ephesians 2:16 which makes the intended meaning of "atone" crystal clear: "And like as he made the Jewes and Gentiles at one betwene themselfes, euen so he made them bothe at one with God, that there should be nothing to break the attonement, but that the thynges in heauen and the thinges in earth should be ioined together as it wer into one body."

In this article, I will examine three inseparable perspectives on the oneness made possible through the Atonement of Christ—viewing this central event of human history as a "happy homecoming,"[5] as the "whole meaning of the law,"[6] and as the means of becoming a "partaker of the divine nature."[7]

The Atonement as a "Happy Homecoming"

The story of Adam and Eve's expulsion from and return to the Garden parallels a common three-part literary pattern in ancient Near Eastern literature: trouble at home, exile abroad, and happy homecoming.[8] The pattern is as old as the Egyptian story of Sinuhe from 1800 BCE[9] and is replicated in scriptural accounts of Israel's apostasy and return[10] as well as in the lives of biblical characters such as Jacob.[11] The theme is as ubiquitous in modern literature as it was in Old Testament times.[12]

To the ancients, however, this pattern was more than a mere storytelling convention, since it reflected a sequence of events common in widespread ritual practices for priests and kings.[13] Margaret Barker[14] describes how the thinking of early Christians applied this pattern to the story of Adam and Eve, and how it seems to have reflected their own hopes for a return to the original faith, the authentic priesthood, and the true temple:

> The Christian vision reverses the story in Genesis 1-3, and has humans restored to Eden… Adam was remembered as the first high priest, and Jesus was described as the new Adam. The Christians remembered and hoped for the earlier Eden—the true temple—and saw themselves returning to the place and the priesthood from which they had been driven. This was their world view.… [T]he "Moses" religion with the Ten Commandments and the Aaron priesthood did not finally replace the Abrahamic faith and the Melchizedek priesthood [as the dominant strain of Judaism] until just before the first temple was destroyed.

True to the archetype of Adam and Eve, Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son also concerns the outbound journey of the transgressor, his "coming to himself"[15] in the remembrance of the bounty of his former home, and his return to the embrace of a loving father.[16] The emphasis of the story is on the wholehearted devotion of the father to secure blessings that were intended for his wayward child from the outset. "However large his family a father cannot spare [even] one."[17] He watches and waits until his lost child returns, and when he sees him, "he disregards the deference due him,"[18] throws aside any notion of

propriety, and runs to greet his wayward son.[19] "There is no holding back on the father's part, no waiting for his [son] to make the first move."[20] The father reaches out eagerly in tender embrace, bestows a kiss as a token of pardon,[21] and joyfully prepares the emblems of investiture:[22] a robe, a ring, a pair of shoes, and a fatted calf.

With equal poignancy, Nephi explores this theme in an anguished psalm of danger and deliverance.[23] Packard describes the setting:

> This passage occurs at a crucial point in the Book of Mormon. Lehi has just died, leaving his sons without his guidance. Under Lehi's authority, Nephi had become his brothers' "ruler" and "teacher."[24] But with Lehi gone, Laman and Lemuel are angry with Nephi, saying, "We will not have him to be our ruler; for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren, to rule over this people."[25] Just after Nephi's psalm, we find Laman and Lemuel becoming increasingly angry with Nephi, "insomuch that they did seek to take away [his] life."[26] The Lord warns Nephi to flee for his life into the wilderness, just as He earlier warned Lehi to escape from those who sought his life.[27]

At the heart of his psalm,[28] Nephi offers a prayer of supplication:

> O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may walk in the path of the low valley, that I may be strict in the plain road!

Hugh Nibley explains the significance of the words of Nephi's psalm for the people of the desert:

> [In] the vast photo-album of Arabic lyric poetry [and] the actual photographs of inscriptions scratched on a thousand red rocks, we will find… countless duplications of this particular snapshot—the lone wanderer lost in the darkness. Of all the images that haunt the early Arab poets, this is by all odds the most common. It is the standard nightmare of the Arab; and it is the supreme boast of every poet that he has traveled long distances through dark and dreary wastes all alone.[29]

In the stories of the desert, "a person escaping from his enemy always wanted to take the low, quick, straight path as far as he can get away from him—the easiest path to take and the surest to escape, not having to run up and down hills."[30] Psalm 27:11-12 parallels Nephi's plea, "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain path [i.e., "a level path"[31]] because of my enemies. Deliver me not over unto the will of mine enemies."

Nephi continues:[32]

> O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!

Explains Nibley:

The great [Arab writer] Abu Zaid said there was one prayer that he had learned in a dream which alone was his guarantee of safety in the desert: "Preserve me, O God; … guard me in my person and my property.… Cover me with the curtain of grace." Just as Nephi prays: "O Lord wilt thou me encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!"[33]

Pompeo Batoni, 1708-1787: *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, 1773

When [an Arab is trying to escape his enemies], he runs to the tent of any great sheikh he can find. He goes in and kneels down before the sheikh and says, "[*Ana dakhiluka*.] I am your suppliant." The sheikh is then obligated to put his caftan [—his great hooded robe—] over [the suppliant's] *katef* which is the same word as shoulder—to put the hem of his garment over his shoulder and say, "*Ahlan wa-sahlan wa-marhaban*. This is your tent, this is your family." The Hebrew word *ohel* for tent is the same as the Arabic word *ahl* for family. [When he says *ahlan*, that means both family and tent.[34]] He says, "We'll make a place for you." Then the lord or the chief is under obligation to defend you against the enemies that are chasing you. You are now under his protection, and he will protect you.[35]

Nephi relies on the Lord Himself as his Protector. The scriptural imagery has him running toward the place of safety with upraised arms, a universal sign of distress that can be seen clearly from a distance, from beyond the sound of a comforting voice or the

touch of a gentle hand.[36] Above all else, Nephi wants to be encircled with the Lord's robe of righteousness, to be one with Him, to have his sins covered over with the Lord's glory, and to have that glory be eternally upon him. Yet he knows that his deliverance from sin and death will not be a cheap affair that might be effected by a mere declaration of reassuring words. Instead, his Redemption is a possibility that carries a dreadful cost.[37] This truth is no mere footnote to the Gospel but rather, as Alma explains: "the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal."[38]

The Atonement as "the Whole Meaning of the Law"

The results of this "great and last sacrifice" have been described in many different ways. For example, there is the term "expiate"—which means "to completely satisfy or appease; to make propitious"[39]—and the term "redeem"—which can mean to "pay a ransom to deliver a captive."[40] These two terms address the idea of *justification*, the aspect of the sacrifice of Christ that enables forgiveness and release from the bondage of sin. But "expiate" and "redeem" do not adequately express the concept of *sanctification*, the complementary process by which we may be "spiritually… born of God," having received a "mighty change in [our] hearts" and "his image" in our countenances.[41] For, in the end, it is not enough for us to be cleansed from all sin: we must also acquire the divine attributes that qualify us for the society of celestial beings. As Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained, the Final Judgment is one of both actions and effects—not only what we have *done*, but also what we have *become*.[42] As "sons of God," we are to "be like him," for the day shall come when "we shall see [our Father] as he is."[43]

Embracing the meaning of each of the more limited descriptions, the term "atonement" describes both the process and the ultimate result of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.[44] It focuses attention on the most central and important concept of that sacrifice—namely, the idea of "taking two things that have become separated, estranged, or incompatible… and bringing them together again, thus making the two be 'at one.'"[45]

The significance of the Atonement is both intimately personal on the one hand, and a matter of cosmic scale on the other. The cosmic dimension of the Atonement includes the plan of the Father to bring all of creation into perfect harmony, that His "kingdom come. [His] will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."[46] Just as Creation began with subjecting the unity of unorganized matter to successive stages of division and separation,[47] so, in the end of God's work on this earth, all things are to be brought together in one again.[48] For example, in Ephesians 1:10, we read that the Lord intends to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."[49] Similarly, in D&C 128:18, the Lord says that "it is necessary in the ushering in of the dispensation of the fulness of times… that a whole and complete union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers, and glories should take place, and be revealed from the days of Adam even to the present time."

The intimate personal dimension of the Atonement was described by Jesus Christ in His "High Priestly Prayer" on behalf of His disciples. He pleaded that they, and those they later would teach, would be "made perfect in one":
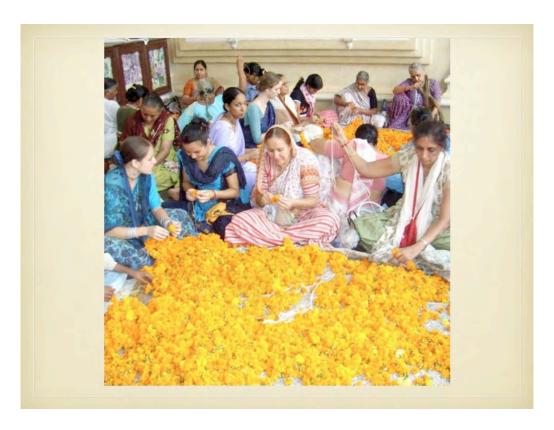
> 20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;
>
> 21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.
>
> 22 And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:
>
> 23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.[50]

At a first level of understanding, the Hebrew term for atonement, *kippur*, can be thought of as roughly approximating the English word "cover."[51] In the Mosaic temple, the idea of *kippur* related to the *kapporet* that formed the lid of the ark of the temple where Jehovah stood to forgive—or cover—the sins of the people. The veil of the temple, also a *kapporet*, covered the entry of the Holy of Holies. Besides the notion of "covering of sin" implied by the term *kippur*, however, there appears to have been the additional concept of "union" with the Divine, a "covering with glory," in the ancient temple cult.[52] After the priest and the people had completed all the rituals and ordinances of the atonement, the veil was opened so that the Lord could tell the people that their sins had been forgiven, symbolically welcoming them into His presence.[53] Following his study of the term *kippur*, Nibley concluded that:[54]

> … the literal meaning of *kaphar* and *kippurim* is a close and intimate embrace, which took place at the *kapporeth* or the front cover or flap of the Tabernacle or tent.[55] The Book of Mormon instances are quite clear, for example, "Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you."[56] "But behold the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled eternally in the arms of his love"…[57] From this it should be clear what kind of oneness is meant by the Atonement—it is being received in a close embrace of the prodigal son, expressing not only forgiveness but oneness of heart and mind that amounts to identity.

The Atonement as the Means of Becoming a "Partaker of the Divine Nature"

The imagery of a "oneness of heart and mind that amounts to identity" recalls certain aspects of the *Holi Festival,* the springtime festival of fire, which is celebrated most enthusiastically in northern part of India.

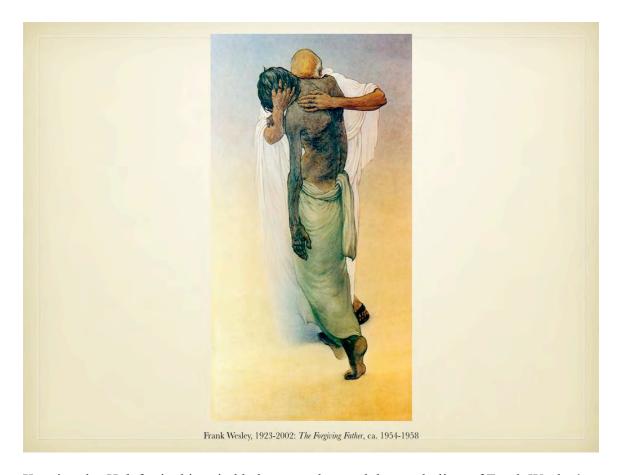During this great festival of color, women sew together bright garlands of flowers, …

… boys dress up in colorful clothing and make loud noises with horns, …

… and in all the market squares one sees huge vats of powder, in every color imaginable.

During the celebration, revelers throw colored powders and liquids on each other to celebrate the triumph of good over evil, purity over sin.

Frank Wesley, 1923-2002: *The Forgiving Father*, ca. 1954-1958

Keeping the *Holi* festival in mind helps us understand the symbolism of Frank Wesley's depiction of the culminating moment in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Raised as a Methodist, Wesley painted this biblical scene using the imagery of his native land. This famous picture shows a "Brahmin father, pale skinned and pure, embracing his exhausted, sun-scorched son who would so obviously fall to the ground from exhaustion without his father's supportive embrace."[58]

Naomi Wray observes: "The color contrast is very strong at the top to emphasize the difference between purity and sin. But the loving embrace of the father, with the son's face covered against his chest, begins to merge at the base of the two figures until their clothing is blended."[59] As the father sustains his faltering son, the fabric of the son's robe becomes imbued with colors symbolizing divine purity, an attribute of God Himself.

Conclusions

When we have proven our faithfulness through all the experiences that the Lord sees fit to inflict,[60] the Atonement will then have full claim on us. In the first stages, it heals our wounds,[61] while, in its ultimate manifestation, it literally clothes us with the glory of God in His similitude[62] and crown us with immortality and eternal life.[63] Of the centrality of the Atonement, the Prophet Joseph Smith said:

The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again on the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it.[64]

Amplifying this thought, C. S. Lewis writes:[65]

This is the whole of Christianity. There is nothing else. It is so easy to get muddled about that. It is easy to think that the Church has a lot of different objects—education, building, missions, holding [meetings]… [However] the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to [re]make them [in the image of Christ]. If they are not doing that, all the [chapels, temples], [priesthood], missions, sermons, even the [Holy Scriptures themselves], are simply a waste of time. [The Savior came to earth] for no other purpose… [T]he whole universe was created for [just this] purpose.[66]

"Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy and grace of the Holy Messiah"![67]

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Endnotes

1 Harold Bloom not only considers William Tyndale "the greatest of [English] Bible translators," but also "the only true rival of Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Walt Whitman as the richest author in the English language," and an "authentic inventor of an English prose style austerely sublime (H. Bloom, Names Divine, pp. 28, 47, 31; cf. D. Daniell, Mind, pp. 7-8; J. Pelikan, Whose Bible, p. 174; N. Shaheen, References, pp. 18-19). In a paper delivered at the opening reception of a Library of Congress exhibition on Tyndale and the Bible, David Daniell, chair of the Tyndale Society and curator of the event for the British Library, said (G. Fineberg, Let There Be. See also Y. French, Courage):

> I was recently in the state of Utah [at Brigham Young University], where a student who is a clever man with a computer gave me at last the definitive figure for how dependent the King James [New Testament] is on Tyndale, and I am happy to announce tonight that the definitive figure is eighty-three percent. Eighty-three percent of the King James Bible is Tyndale exactly.

Elder John A. Widtsoe considered the King James Bible unsurpassed in its "beauty of language and spiritual connotation" (J. A. Widtsoe, Evidences, p. 120). The fact that the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants are both "consistent with the King James tradition" (D. Packard *et al.*, Feasting, pp. ix-x) allows phrases from any one of these books of scripture to more easily suggest associations with like passages in the other two works (J. F. McConkie, Revelation, p. 126. See also discussion in P. L. Barlow, Bible, pp. 176-177).

But, questions of literary aesthetics and stylistic consistency aside, how faithful is the KJV translation to the voice of the original? With respect to the Old Testament, Robert Alter, a contemporary expert in the analysis of biblical narrative as literature, has given his opinion as follows (R. Alter, Genesis, p. xxv; see also G. Hammond, Translations, pp. 664-665):

> The language of biblical narrative in its own time was stylized, decorous, dignified, and readily identified by its audiences as a language of literature, in certain ways distinct from the language of quotidian reality. The tricky complication however, is

that in most respects it also was not a lofty style, and was certainly neither ornate nor euphemistic.… a plain spoken one, and, moreover one that evinces a strong commitment to using a limited set of terms again and again, making an aesthetic virtue out of repetition… The right direction [for a modern English equivalent to ancient Hebrew style] I think was hit on by the King James Version… There is no good reason to render biblical Hebrew as contemporary English, either lexically or syntactically. This is not to suggest that the Bible should be represented as fussily old-fashioned English, but a limited degree of archaizing coloration is entirely appropriate…

Note, however, that this statement does not apply equally well in the case of the KJV New Testament, which was written in common everyday Greek. "As one eminent authority put it, 'an elaborate, elegant style is unsuited to' [New Testament] translation, 'and in proportion as it is rendered in a conscious literary style, it is misrepresented to the modern reader'" (cited in J. R. Clark, Jr., Why the KJV, p. 355. See also P. L. Barlow, Bible, p. 170).

Summarizing the limitations of current translations of the Old Testament, Alter concludes that (R. Alter, Genesis, pp. ix-x):

… in the case of the modern versions, the problem is a shaky sense of English, and in the case of the King James Version, a shaky sense of Hebrew.… [That being said] the KJV, as Gerald Hammond, an eminent British authority on Bible translations has convincingly argued (G. Hammond, Translations), remains the closest approach for the English reader to the original—despite its frequent and at times embarrassing inaccuracies, despite its archaisms, and despite its insistent substitution of Renaissance English tonalities and rhythms for biblical ones.

Attempting to correct the deficiencies of the KJV while retaining appropriate elements of its style, Alter has produced masterful translations of the Pentateuch, the story of David, and the Psalms (R. Alter, David; R. Alter, Five Books; R. Alter, Psalms).

2 S. M. Wilcox, Tyndale, p. 81. That being said, there were Latin precedents for this translation approach—see below.

Even though some commentators erroneously dismiss the obvious derivation of "atonement" as nonsense (e.g., W. E. Vine *et al.*, Dictionary (1996), NT, p. 44: "the explanation of this English word as being 'at-one-ment' is entirely fanciful")`, the approach to translation that produced this new term was well-established at the time William Tyndale's English translation of the Bible was produced. Arthur Henry King explains (A. H. King, Atonement, pp. 331-332):

In the Middle Ages, those who translated the Bible and other theological materials into English did so (as the Germans still do when translating into German) by translating the verbal components of a Greek or Latin word into English elements.… A term people muddle themselves about, for they cannot believe its etymology, is at-one-ment; "to make one," however is exactly what atonement means. "Ment," a

suffix from Latin, makes "atone" into a noun; that's all "ment" does. But "atone" begins… with Wycliff; he had "one" as a verb: "to one," which is daring. It then became "at one" (an adjectival or adverbial form) but retained its character as a verb; from "at one" came the abstract noun "atonement." In the sixteenth century, Tyndale, a Bible translator, made the word equal to the Latin [*adunare*], which means "to unite" (*ad* is an intensifier here). This translation approach… mirrors the Germanic process of translating component parts.

The use of the verb *adunare* was rare in Latin, though it was used by some early Christian writers. Variations of the term (*adunata, adunavit, adunabo*) occur three times in the *Vulgate* (J. J. Bourasse *et al.*, Vulgate; see 2 Chronicles 24:27, 29:20; Ezekiel 11:17), though in contexts with no theological significance.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* points to occurrences of the phrase "to be made/set at one" (meaning "to be reconciled") as early as 1300, an expression that was gradually replaced by the verb "to atone" (J. A. Simpson *et al.*, OED, p. 754). An early example comes from Sir Thomas More, an innovator with the English language who was, ironically, Tyndale's enemy. He wrote in 1513, referring to a reconciliation of a conflict in his History of King Richard III: "Having more regarde to their olde variaunce than their new attonement" (Cited in J. A. Simpson *et al.*, OED).

"Atonement" also connotes wholeness in body, mind, and spirit, as still reflected in the modern use of the French term *salut*, referring both to health and salvation, and frequently used as a greeting. Observes Rey: "Like *fides*, a former religious term that has come into everyday usage, *salus* has been taken up into the language of the Christian church and given a new meaning. The word was originally a derivation of *salvus* (whole, intact)" (A. Rey, Dictionnaire, 2:2009, s.v., salut, translation mine). The close association of health and salvation are equally apparent in other languages, as explained by King (A. H. King, Atonement, p. 331):

> The words "heal" and "whole" are etymologically akin. The sense of "wholeness" and the sense of "healing" are held together in the New Testament expression "the man was made whole" (John 5:9). These words go back to the same root in Indo-European, and in the Germanic languages, they are close. Furthermore, "heal" and "whole" developed apparently separate significances of "curing" and "uniting" but while we take them as separate, we realize ways that these senses are clearly linked.

> One variant of the two is the word *Heiland* (Old English *Heliand*), the main German word for "Savior." It is the translation of "Savior," yet Heiland also means "the Healer," so the Savior is a healer as well. In fact, saving is healing and healing is saving; the dictionary's definitions of *salve* and "salvation" illustrate this fact… Consider also the greeting words "hail" (English), *heil* (German), and *hell* (Scandinavian); all of these greetings mean "may you be well and whole."

Note that Barr, however, provides cautionary arguments against the equating of "holy" and "heal" (as opposed to "whole" and "heal") on an etymological basis (J. Barr, Semantics, pp. 111-114).

While "atonement" is the preferred English term in the LDS Church for both the process and the result of Christ's sacrifice on our behalf, it has naturally been difficult to find terms with similar connotations in other languages (M. Kahne, September 22 2009). For example, the only solution in the translation of Elder Talmage's *Jesus the Christ* from English into French was to leave out the explanation of the English term when the passage was translated (compare, e.g., J. E. Talmage, Jesus the Christ, pp. 21-22 with J. E. Talmage, Jésus le Christ, p. 24). In other cases, even though there was no attempt to explain "atonement" to French readers, relevant differences in the English translation required an explanation from the translator (see, e.g., J. E. Talmage, Jésus le Christ, pp. 97-98). Attempts to directly substitute the French terms *expier/expiation* for the English terms "to atone/atonement" are fraught with challenges, due to their association with the ideas of chastisement or suffering (C. Dogniez *et al.*, Pentateuque, Glossaire, s.v. apaisement, pp. 868-870). The term "reconciliation" (available both in French and English) is a better choice (see, e.g., J. F. Smith, Jr., Doctrines, 9 March 1935, 1:125 and 2 March 1935, 1:122), yet unfortunately it is still not sufficient to adequately convey the idea of perfect unity that is felicitously found in the term "atonement."

The term "reconciliation," derives from a root that means "to be seated again with someone." About the terms "reconciliation," "return," and "repentance," Nibley writes:

> [Just prior to Romans 5:11,] Paul has… told us that the Lord "sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High," so "reconciliation" is a very good word for atonement there, since it means literally to be seated again with someone (*re-con-silio*)—so that atonement is to be reunited with God. The Greek word translated as "reconciliation" is *katallagein*. That is a business term which the Greek-English Lexicon tells us means "exchange, especially of money; … change from enmity to friendship, reconciliation; … reconciliation of sinners with God." It is the return to the *status ante quo*, whether as a making of peace or a settlement of debt (H. W. Nibley, Atonement, p. 556).

> [*Katallagein*] means "changing back again to where you were." It's the same thing as *teshûvah* in Hebrew. *Teshuvah* is the Hebrew term for "returning, repentance." But where is the oneness [you find in the term "atonement"]? (H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 16, 1:198)

> [*Teshuvah*] means "a return"—you return to where you were. But you can never come back; you can't go home again after you have sinned. That has to be washed away, so there is baptism. The idea is to return, but how can you return to a place if you never were there before? All throughout the doctrine of atonement, a pre-existence is assumed—returning to the presence of the Father, coming home again. *The Pearl*, the earliest Christian hymn, is beautiful on that particular subject… (H. W. Nibley, Message 2005, pp. 487-501). In [the term] "reconciliation" you have a settlement or an understanding, but that doesn't make you one… (H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 16, 1:198).

3 W. Tyndale, Works, pp. 158, 431, cited in W. W. Skeat, Dictionary, p. 40, s.v., atone.

4 J. Gallagher, Atoning.

5 A. Gileadi, Literary, p. 12.

6 Alma 34:14.

7 2 Peter 1:4.

8 A. Gileadi, Literary, p. 12. Campbell, somewhat controversially, expands this idea to the level of a universal "monomyth." He characterizes the "adventure of the hero" in general stages of departure, initiation, and return (J. Campbell, Hero, pp. 49-251). From a ritual perspective, these three parts correspond to van Gennep's classic stages of separation (*préliminaire*), transition (*liminaire*), and reintegration (*postliminaire*) (A. van Gennep, Rites, p. 11; cf. V. Turner, Ritual Process). Turner generalized and elaborated Van Gennep's three stages and applied them to the phenomenon of religious pilgrimage (V. Turner *et al.*, Pilgrimage, esp. pp. 1-17, 34-39). For a brief summary of later critiques of Turner's model, especially his notion of *communitas*, see J. Eade *et al.*, Contesting the Sacred, pp. x-xxiii, 4-5.

9 J. B. Pritchard, ANET, pp. 18-22. The pattern of "return" in this story is discussed in J. Assman, Death, pp. 164-185.

10 J. E. Coleson, Life Cycle; A. Gileadi, Literary; A. Gileadi, Decoded; S. D. Ricks, Prophetic.

11 Genesis 27-33.

12 N. Frye, Secular Scripture. Somewhat controversially, Frye (pp. 97-98) asserted the virtual universality of this theme, writing that there are:

> … four primary narrative movements in literature. These are, first, the descent from a higher world; second, the descent to a lower world; third, the ascent from a lower world; and fourth, the ascent to a higher world. All stories in literature are complications of, or metaphorical derivations from, these four narrative radicals… Explicitly for the first eighteen centuries of the Christian era, and implicitly after and long before that, these patterns of ascent and descent have been spread over a mythological universe consisting of four main levels, two above our own, and one below it. The highest level is in heaven, the place of the presence of God… Level two is the earthly paradise or Garden of Eden, where man lived before the fall… Level three is the world of ordinary experience we now live in… Level four is the demonic world or hell, in Christianity not part of the order of nature but an autonomous growth, usually placed below ground.

13 See, e.g., D. E. Callender, Adam, pp. 211-218.

14 M. Barker, Temple Theology, pp. 4, 7. See also M. Barker, Revelation, pp. 20, 327.

15 Luke 15:17.

16 Luke 15:11-32. See W. Barclay, Parables, p. 187; A. J. Hultgren, Parables, p. 72; R. L. Millet, Lost.

17 W. Barclay, Parables, p. 183.

18 D. Packard *et al.*, Feasting, p. 47; cf. J. Jeremias, Parables, p. 102.

19 A *hadith qudsi* of Muhammad portrays God as saying: "And if [my servant] draws nearer to Me by a handsbreadth, I draw nearer to him by an armslength; and if he draws nearer to Me by an armslength, I draw nearer to him by a fathom; and if he comes to Me walking, I come to him running" (cited in W. A. Graham, Divine, p. 127).

20 D. Packard *et al.*, Feasting, p. 47.

21 J. Jeremias, Parables, p. 102.

22 W. Barclay, Parables, pp. 181-182; J. Jeremias, Parables, pp. 102-103.

23 2 Nephi 4:15-35.

24 2 Nephi 5:19.

25 2 Nephi 5:3.

26 2 Nephi 5:2.

27 D. Packard *et al.*, Feasting, p. 92. See 2 Nephi 2:1-2.

28 2 Nephi 4:32-33.

29 H. W. Nibley, Approach, p. 253.

30 H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 16. According to Nibley, this "is the purest desert talk for 'May I stick to the *wadi* [—the dry desert river bed—] and not get off the clearly marked mainline [highway] that everyone follows!" (H. W. Nibley, Approach, p. 73). It "means 'sticking right to the path [, the *derekh*]" (H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 16). Psalm 1:6 reads, "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish"—or as the Jewish Study Bible renders it, "For the Lord cherishes the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked is doomed" (A. Berlin *et al.*, Jewish, p. 1285). Hugh Nibley paraphrases, "The way of the wicked shall be lost in the sand" (H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 16).

31 A. Berlin *et al.*, Jewish, p. 1311.

32 2 Nephi 4:33.

33 H. W. Nibley, Approach, p. 253.

34 H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 18.

35 Ibid., 16, 1:199; cf. Psalm 27:5, H. W. Nibley, Approach to Abraham, pp. 74-75.

36 Writes Nibley (H. W. Nibley, Temples Everywhere, p. 14):

> As you approach the camp surrounding the temple, you signify your intent with a reassuring sign, a *signum*, visible from a distance, calling attention to yourself as Adam does in his prayer and demonstrating your peaceful intent. Upon reaching the gate, you present your token, a tangible object (compare touch, digit, *dactyl*, or a solid handclasp). All these serve as a *tessera hospitalis*, admitting one to a closed group or a party, or a club, guild meeting, etc. It is presented to the doorkeeper, a herald trained in such matters: "The Holy One of Israel is the Keeper of the Gate, and he employs no servant there!" Most important, "he cannot be deceived" (2 Nephi 9:41). The token recognized, you pronounce your name to the doorkeeper in a low voice, a whisper, for it is a special name agreed on between you and your host and should not be picked up and used by anyone else.

37 D. Bonhoeffer, Cost, pp. 45-48. "Surely it is a lighter labor to make a world than to save one. Scripture will call the heavens the work of God's finger (Psalm 8:3), but redemption will be called the labor of His arm (Psalm 77:15) and the travail of His soul (Isaiah 53:11)" (W. A. Gage, Gospel, pp. 83-84).

38 Alma 34:14.

39 "Christ's sacrifice [may be] understood in terms of expiation (Greek *hiastérion*; Romans 3:25) the canceling of guilt and cleansing of sin" (D. N. Freedman *et al.*, Eerdmans, s.v., Atonement, p. 128). The term is derived "from L. *expiatus*, pp. of *expiare* 'make amends,' from *ex-* 'completely'+ *piare* 'propitiate, appease,' from *pius* 'faithful, loyal, devout'" (D. Harper, Dictionary, s.v., expiation). Unfortunately, the meaning of the term "expiation" in English and Romance languages has shifted quite a distance from its roots, leading French translators of the *Septuagint* to replace it by *apaisement* (= English "appeasement") (C. Dogniez *et al.*, Pentateuque, Glossaire, s.v. apaisement, pp. 868-870). They explain that in continuing to use the term "expiation," the:

> … original idea of a reconciliation that is obtained through the offering has been lost. As a result, a whole set of Christian teachings have developed around the idea that man must "expiate" his sins, i.e., pay for them through chastisement or suffering, in order to receive forgiveness of his sins by their "expiation." Such terms are no longer suitable for expressing *hilasmós-exiláskomai*.

40 See A. Rey, Dictionnaire, s.v. "acheter," 1:15-16, "expier," 1:817. Regarding "redemption," Hugh Nibley explains (H. W. Nibley, Atonement, pp. 556-557):

> The monetary metaphor is by far the commonest, being the simplest and easiest to understand. Hence, frequently the word "redemption" literally means to buy back, that is, to reacquire something you owned previously. Thus Moses: "But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh" (Deuteronomy 7:8). Redemption, or Atonement, restores one to a former, happier condition. "And what one nation in

the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemest to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?" (2 Samuel 7:23). By redemption, someone has paid a price to get you off, but the frequent use of the commercial analogy is not out of reverence for trade and commerce but the opposite. The redeemed are bought to clear them of all worldly obligation by paying off the world in its own currency, after which it has no further claim on the redeemed: "And the child of eight days shall be circumcised for you, every male through your generations, born of a house or a purchase of silver of any outsider who is not of thy seed. He must certainly be circumcised, born of your house, or bought with your silver; and it shall be my covenant in [among or with] thy flesh for an everlasting covenant" (Genesis 17:12-13). All the newborn are taken into the family, which is united by an eternal covenant by the token shedding of blood (circumcision) to become the seed of Abraham—this is a real *at-one-ment*.

The Greek equivalent is *lytrosis*, a ransoming. Paul tells the saints to prepare for the salvation that has been made available by disengaging from this world—"denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:12)—so that God "might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people" (Titus 2:14).

Elsewhere, Nibley explains redemption as meaning that a (H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 16, 1:198):

… price is paid… and it's got you off, but you don't even have to know the person who paid the price, let alone be one with him. The idea of being one [as in the word "atonement"] goes beyond having the price paid.

41 Alma 5:14. See J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, p. 596.

42 D. H. Oaks, To Become, p. 32. See also J. E. Faulconer, Self-Image.

43 1 John 3:2; cf. Moroni 7:48.

44 H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 16, 1:199.

45 S. E. Robinson, Believing, p. 7.

46 Matthew 6:10; cf. 3 Nephi 13:10; D&C 65:5-6; M. Barker, Earth, pp. 8-9; H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the PGP, 10, p. 126.

47 J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, pp. 85-87.

48 The need for this reunification is not only due to the physical division and separation of creation, but also in order to restore the order of the everlasting covenant that has been continually and repeatedly broken by mankind (see Ibid., pp. 216-220, 501-502 n. 6-34).

49 See also 1 Corinthians 15:28; Colossians 1:15-17; D&C 27:13.

50 John 17:20-23; cf. D&C 38 :27.

51 See J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, p. 502 n. 6-36.

52 M. Barker, Temple Theology, p. 37. Barker associates such ritual imagery with the concept of "cleaving" to God (see also J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, p. 185; A. J. Heschel, Heavenly Torah, pp. 190-193). However, she notes that "the meaning seems to have shifted from 'union' to 'obedience' after the demise of the ancient temple."

53 H. W. Nibley, Teachings of the Book of Mormon, 16, 1:198.

54 H. W. Nibley, Atonement, pp. 567-568.

55 See J. M. Bradshaw, God's Image, p. 503 n. 6-37.

56 Alma 5:33.

57 2 Nephi 1:15.

58 G. Wheeler *et al.*, Wesley.

59 N. Wray, Wesley, p. 44.

60 See Mosiah 3:19.

61 Isaiah 53:5.

62 D&C 45:44, 65:5; 1 John 3:2-3; Moroni 7:48.

63 D&C 20:14, 66:12, 75:5, 81:6, 138:51.

64 J. Smith, Jr., Teachings, p. 121.

65 C. S. Lewis, Mere, pp. 169-170.

66 Cf. Moses 1:39.

67 2 Nephi 2:8.