

Atonement 1

(Priest Lesson March 2015 – Roald Peterson)

Introduction

- No doctrine in the gospel is more important than the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
- The Atonement of Jesus Christ is the most important event and the most meaningful event in the history of all God's creations – that means the multi-verse.
- All other doctrines and aspects of the gospel are appendages to the Atonement. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 121)
- There is no event or portion of your life, from birth to death, from eternity before your birth, to eternity after your death, resurrection, and judgment, that does not profoundly depend upon the Atonement.
- The most important choice you will make in this life is how you will or will not take advantage of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.
- This being the case, it would behoove us to learn everything we can about the Atonement, and to put it where it belongs, at the center of our lives – because whether we know it or not, it already is at the center of our lives.

Purpose of the Atonement

- God governs the universe by law and he has instituted laws to govern His children and to allow them to progress and become like him.

(D&C130:20–21) 20 There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

21 And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.

(D&C132:5) For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world.

(see also 2 Nephi 2:13).

- Willfully breaking the law is sin.
(1 John 3:4) Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.
(James 4:17) Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.
- If a blessing or reward is offered for obedience to a law, there must also be a penalty paid if the laws broken. This is the other half of the law justice.
(Alma 42:16–18)... repentance could not come unto men except there were a punishment, which also was eternal ... affixed opposite to the plan of happiness, which was as eternal also as the life of the soul.
... how could a man ... sin if there was no law? How could there be a law save there was a punishment?
Now, there was a punishment affixed, and a just law given ...
- If God relied only upon the law of justice he would save, at best, only one of his children. To allow us to develop godly attributes over time, he instituted the

law of mercy, also known as the new and everlasting covenant – or the Fulness of the gospel.

- Balancing these two covenants, or laws is a requirement of godhood – which by the way, we must also learn how to do. It is so essential to godhood that if God did not do it perfectly he would cease to be God.

(Alma 42:22–26) 22 But there is a law given, and a punishment affixed, and a repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth; otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law, and the law inflicteth the punishment; if not so, the works of justice would be destroyed, and God would cease to be God.

23 But God ceaseth not to be God, and mercy claimeth the penitent, and mercy cometh because of the atonement; and the atonement bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead; and the resurrection of the dead bringeth back men into the presence of God; and thus they are restored into his presence, to be judged according to their works, according to the law and justice.

24 For behold, justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved.

25 What, do ye suppose that mercy can rob justice? I say unto you, Nay; not one whit. If so, God would cease to be God.

26 And thus God bringeth about his great and eternal purposes, which were prepared from the foundation of the world. And thus cometh about the salvation and the redemption of men, and also their destruction and misery.

- All of us sin and are therefore fallen and subject to justice (see Alma 34:9, 16; Romans 3:23).
- Because we are fallen, we have need of an Atonement.
- All of us would suffer an everlasting physical and spiritual death without Christ's Atonement (see 2 Nephi 9:6–12; Helaman 14:16).
- Because all of us sin, we would have remained subject to the devil forever without the Atonement of Christ (see 2 Nephi 9:8–12; Alma 34:8–9; Romans 3:23).

About the Atonement

- Only Jesus Christ possessed the qualifications and attributes necessary to perform an infinite Atonement.
- As the Only Begotten Son of God, the Savior inherited the capacity to suffer for the sins of all the children of God (see Jacob 4:5; D&C 20:21; 19:18; Mosiah 4:7).
- Free from personal sin (see 1 John 3:5; Hebrews 4:15; D&C 45:3–4).
- The Savior had power over death (see John 5:26; 10:17–18).

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- By means of His divine attributes and the power of the Father, Jesus accomplished the infinite and eternal Atonement.
 - Jesus submitted Himself to the will of the Father in performing the Atonement (see Matthew 26:39; Mark 14:36; John 4:34; 8:29; Mosiah 15:7).
 - The Atonement was an act of pure love on the part of God the Eternal Father and His Son Jesus Christ (see John 15:13; 3:16; 1 John 4:7–10).
 - The Atonement made by the Savior began in Gethsemane and ended at the empty tomb (see Matthew 26:36–46; Luke 22:39–44; Mark 15:25–37).
 - The Savior descended below all things in taking upon Himself the sins of all the children of God (see D&C 122:8; 88:6; 2 Nephi 9:21).
 - The suffering endured by the Savior was beyond what any mortal could endure (see Mosiah 3:7; D&C 19:15–20; 1 Nephi 19:12).
 - The infinite Atonement affects worlds without number and will save all of God’s children except sons of perdition (see Alma 34:9–10, 12; D&C 76:22–24, 40–43).
 - The Atonement of Christ harmonized the laws of justice and mercy. Mercy cannot rob justice (see Alma 42:13–14, 24–25).
 - Justice is satisfied by the Atonement, and thus mercy can allow our souls to be cleansed through repentance (see Alma 42:13–15, 22–25; 34:15–16; Mosiah 15:9).
 - Jesus stood as a mediator, or intercessor, for all the children of God in satisfying the demands of justice (see Alma 34:10–16; Mosiah 15:7–9; Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 7:25; 1 Timothy 2:5–6).
 - The Atonement of Jesus Christ is essential for the salvation of all the children of God.
 - The Savior overcame physical death and secured a resurrection for all the children of God (see Alma 7:12; Mosiah 16:7–10; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22; Mormon 9:12–14).
 - The agony and suffering of Christ made it possible for all of us to escape eternal punishment if we repent (see Alma 7:13; D&C 19:15–19).
 - Little children are redeemed through the Atonement of Christ (see Moroni 8:8; D&C 29:46–50; Mosiah 3:16–18; 15:25).
 - The Atonement of Christ brings everyone back into the presence of God for judgment (see 2 Nephi 2:10; Revelation 20:11–15).
 - We must do the will of the Father and the Son to receive the full benefit of the Atonement.
 - The Savior came to save all who would obey Him (see Hebrews 5:9; 2 Nephi 9:21; Mosiah 3:19; Alma 11:37).
 - If we do not keep God’s commandments, we must suffer for our own sins (see Alma 11:41; D&C 19:15–20).
- Mercy is extended to those who keep God’s commandments (see Daniel 9:4; Hosea 10:12; Psalm 103:17–18).
 - Because we are fallen, we have need of an Atonement.
(D&C 19:15-19) 15 Therefore I command you to repent—repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore—how sore you know not, how exquisite you know not, yea, how hard to bear you know not.
16 For behold, I, God, have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer if they would repent;
17 But if they would not repent they must suffer even as I;
18 Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—
19 Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men.

Purpose in All These Attributes

Necessary: creator, power of god, ability to die, perfect obedience, willing to submit will to father, without sin, filled with love, firstborn, etc.

Reading

Alma 42