

NIGERIAN BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OGBOMOSO

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**BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT AND THE
IMPLICATION FOR AFRICAN CHRISTIANITY**

**AN ESSAY PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGICAL
STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF DIVINITY
(THEOLOGY)**

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ABSTRACT

The Divine expectations is for the humanity to understand, experience and manifest the efficacy of the atoning work of Christ for an authentic and consistence, Christian living, relevant to the immediate context in particular and the whole world in general.

The call of numerous scholars and soul-winning believers for a more appropriate theology or a better understanding of the salvation message, which is more readily available for the context of the African, is long overdue. Giant steps have being taken to answering the quest, which the "Western Christianity" has not addressed for a long time up till now. The limitation of the African Christian to confront with boldness and confidence the various difficulties or challenges, which not only militate against his life and existence but also retards his impact on the world is note worthy.

A good grasp of the scriptural concept of the atonement by the African would go a long way in solving most of the persistent struggles which possess treat to Christianity in Africa. This understanding would help to solve similar or more difficult problems in any other part of the world. And would equally release the Divine resources meant for the believers who appropriate and proclaim the atoning work of Christ with the corresponding benefits and implication.

This presentation reviews the biblical teachings of the atonement which the Old Testament fore shadow and was fulfilled in the New Testament, accomplished in the sacrifice of Christ which was the perfect, once and for all time event.

The African Traditional or Cultural concept shows similarity with the scriptural understanding yet with a very sharp contrast. An African Christian perspective of theology of Atonement emphasizes God as the initiator of atonement, sin as the necessity for atonement, salvation as the goal of atonement and the extent of atonement is universal.

A close examination of Biblical, and African understanding of Atonement gives rise to the benefits and the implication for African Christianity, then followed by the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

B CONCLUSION

The submission of this essay reaffirms that God is the creator, sustainer and initiator of atonement as a remedy for the alienation of man from his maker. This was foreshadowed, prophesied in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament, which leads to reconciliation between man and his creator.

Though Africans have a concept of God and the alienation from him, there is a provision to amend through rituals and various forms of sacrifices. Like the Old Testament sacrifices that cannot solve man's problem of sin, there exists a perfect sacrifice that satisfies God's justice, nature and character in his only begotten son, revealed in the New Testament. To make the atoning work of Christ efficacious in the life of a people, community and nation along with their various sectors, there must be an acknowledgement, acceptance of God's atoning sacrifice appropriated by a regenerated person(s) in order to enjoy an authentic, and victorious Christian living. The results and the benefits of atonement cannot be exhaustive; these give rise to the responsibilities for effective witnessing, ministry and livelihoods.

C RECOMMENDATIONS

Supporting the development of African indigenous theology the writer encourages further effort on the significance of the elements or symbols relating to the atoning sacrifice and their usage as a remembrance to aid our faith as it replaces and denies syncretism. Also, there should be an attempt to intensely preach the atoning death of the Lord so that the mind, the heart, and the thinking of African can be purified. Another area is the systematic development of the biblical basis for the whole existence of mankind, using Africa as a case study, then the expectation to make this world a better place would be accomplished.