

## **What is the difference between Atonement and Expiation?**

**"Atonement"** is to attain forgiveness for some sin or transgression, e.g. "I atoned for betraying my friend". It is something that you do. **"Expiation"** means to clear away the record, to make it as if it never existed. It is not something you can do - you cannot expiate your own sins.

What is an example of expiation?

The act of expiation is a way to atone for something you did that was wrong. ... The idea of atonement stretches across all religions, from Judaism's Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) to perhaps the most famous example of expiation, **the Christian doctrine of Christ dying to absolve the world's sins.**

1a: the act of expiating something : the act of extinguishing the guilt incurred by something... the Mass, the principal church ceremony that celebrates the sacrifice of Christ for the *expiation* of the original sin of Adam and Eve.— *The Root* (online)  
b: the act or process of making atonement for something. When the available files failed to provide a complete picture of Argentine complicity, what began as an attempt at public *expiation* and national exorcism of its Nazi ghosts ended in depictions of Argentina as even more entangled in and haunted by its Nazi past.— Victoria Allison

2: the means by which expiation or atonement is made. Well, all I can do now is to carry out his wishes; that will be my *expiation* for my neglect.— Bram Stoker  
You wanted to write about the way people left so much food on their plates and crumpled a few dollar bills down, as though it were an offering, *expiation* for the wasted food.— Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Examples of *expiation* in a Sentence

Recent Examples on the Web  
And this revelation, investigation, and *expiation* not only purged the political system but reaffirmed its legitimacy before the public.— Mark Danner, *The New York Review of Books*, 1 July 2021

In a vain attempt to ward off further divine retribution, thousands of European men wandered from town to town as flagellants, whipping and scourging themselves in collective acts of *expiation*.— Niall Ferguson Bloomberg Opinion, *Star Tribune*, 31 July 2021

### **Expiatory in American English**

#### **ADJECTIVE**

able to make [atonement](#) or expiation; offered by way of expiation

*expiatory sacrifices*

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## Word origin

[1540–50; < LL *expiātōrius*, equiv. to *expiā(re)* ( see [expiate](#)) + *-tōrius* -TORY<sup>1</sup>]

This word is first recorded in the period 1540–50. Other words that entered English at around the same time

include: *cabinet*, *labyrinth*, *monitor*, *telltale*, *vacuum-tory* is a suffix occurring in loanwords from Latin, orig. adjectival derivatives of agent nouns ending in **-tor** (*predatory*); also forming adjectival derivatives directly from verbs (*obligatory*; *transitory*)

## Expiatory in British English

### ADJECTIVE

1. capable of making [expiation](#)
2. given or [offered](#) in expiation

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## Examples of 'expiatory' in a sentence

That 'for' is not [condescending](#), [still](#) less expiatory; it [affirms](#) a [bond](#).

*TIMES, SUNDAY TIMES (2008)*

The name [derives](#) from "februa", the means of purification, expiatory [offerings](#).

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Could not a [decision](#) be made for me by the birds and the [flesh](#) of the expiatory [victims](#)?

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The [bay laurel](#) plant was used in expiatory [sacrifices](#) and in making the [crown](#) of [victory](#) at these games.

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The [text also ignores](#) public [festivals](#), [death rites](#) and expiatory rights.

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He therefore offered [prayers](#) and an expiatory sacrifice for these [warriors](#) who had [died](#) in a state of [sin](#).

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Violations of "pietas" [required](#) a "piaculum", expiatory rites.

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They were not part of a regularly [scheduled](#) religious festival on the [calendar](#), but were held as expiatory rites "religionis causa", [occasioned](#) by religious concerns.