



PROPITIATION

Propitiation means to appease or satisfy someone; to make amends for a wrong that has been committed. It speaks of how God is completely satisfied with Jesus Christ's atonement.

The word propitiation is found three times in the scriptures, once in the book of Romans (3:25), and twice in 1 John (2:2, 4:10).

The Scope of Propitiation

1. The basis on which God saves the believer is the propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God, through Christ, appeased His own wrath against the sinner by paying the penalty. His justice demanded *Himself*. As a result, God can justify the believer without compromising His righteousness; He can accept him into His family without accepting his sin!

2. The Old Testament sacrifices were a shadow of Christ's coming atonement (Hebrews ch. 10). To receive remission of sins then, a person had to apply the *blood* of bulls or goats on the mercy seat in the tabernacle (or temple). The mercy seat, which was on the ark of the covenant, was the place of atonement, the place where sins were forgiven and God's wrath appeased (Leviticus ch. 1-16). These elaborate sacrifices, however, could not *take away* any sin; they could only cover it (Hebrews ch. 9-10). They had to be offered continually because there was no offering yet available which could take the sins away.

3. God had no pleasure in the animal sacrifices. He established them to show man that he is a sinner, that sin requires payment (death), and that the payment could be paid by a substitute (Hebrews 10:5-8). These sacrifices continued for hundreds of years, yet the thousands of animals offered could not permanently satisfy God's wrath. They were to prepare mankind for the one to come who could (Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:24).

4. When the fullness of time had come, God sent to earth the only person in the universe who could propitiate His wrath for eternity. It was His only begotten son (John 1:18). He came to shed His sinless blood and die a substitutionary death to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Jesus took the place of the world, and God poured all the wrath He had towards the world out on Him. His one sacrifice fully made amends for all its sins (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:12, 26, 10:12).

5. While Jesus Himself is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, it will *not* be saved (Matthew 7:13-14). Each individual must *personally* accept Christ for His atonement to apply to himself (John 1:12-13). Under the law, God showed mercy at the mercy seat. Now, Jesus Christ is the mercy seat—the place of atonement. The only way a person can receive atonement for his sins is to go to the mercy seat (Christ) and accept His work in His behalf. The believer will never experience God's wrath; the sacrifice of his *indwelling* substitute (Christ) has eternally satisfied the Lord and His law's curse against him (Galatians 3:13) and treated Christ as a sinner so He could treat the "sinner" as righteous (1 Peter 2:24).

Lessons

- ✓ God's anger has been fully satisfied in Christ – don't live in unending shame
- ✓ Give thanks for the expansiveness of Christ's work – share with others
- ✓ Our forgiveness of others should be motivated by the completion of God's forgiveness of us