



Course: Salvation
Introductory Lesson Two
Lesson Title: Christ our Propitiation

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Text: *Romans 3:25* 'Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;'

Introduction: Meaning of Propitiation
The dictionary defines the word propitiate as 'to appease an offended person'.

In relation to God, propitiation involves two things.

- 1) ...satisfying the righteous demands of God's holiness in order for a sinner to receive forgiveness.
- 2) ...changing the sinful condition of man so he or she can be reconciled to God.

The underlying thought concerning propitiation is that sin is an offence to the holiness of God. Propitiation shows...

- 1) God's hatred for sin. Propitiation cannot change God's anger towards sin. God's hatred towards sin is unchanging.
- 2) God's love for the sinner. The love of God is seen in that Christ died for us while we were yet sinners.

Propitiation reveals the wrath of God and the love of God
Christ became our propitiation on the cross.

God cannot show mercy with disregard to truth and righteousness.

But God promised that mercy would be joined together with truth.
Psalm 85:10 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.'

Introductory Story: No place for mercy in justice.

A person who has committed murder stands trial. He is found guilty. The judge pronounces the death sentence. The prisoner must satisfy the demands of the law by being put to death.

What can the prisoner do to save himself? Nothing

The prisoner can be strong and healthy or weak and ill, it makes no difference.

He can do many good works but this also makes no difference because there is a sentence of death over him.

The sentence must be carried out or justice has been denied.

The law condemns and the sentence of the law is death.

The demands of the law are inflexible.

The prisoner can never go free as the righteous demands of the law must be satisfied.

The guilty will always be condemned by the law.

A person in everlasting torment will never be able to appease the righteous demands of the eternal God.

The gospel message is that we are in a similar situation as the prisoner on death row. The law demands death.

It is impossible to save ourselves.

But there is One who can meet the righteous demands of the law on our behalf – He stands in our place.

Christ is our propitiation.

Through His death on the cross propitiation is made for us.

It is by faith in His blood that we are propitiated.

Three Greek words translated propitiation

- 1) 'Hilasterion' refers to 'Christ as the place of propitiation', *Romans 3:25*. He is the mercy seat where propitiation has been made by His blood.
- 2) 'Hilasmos' refers to 'Christ as the means of propitiation', *1 John 2:2; 4:10*. Christ Himself is our propitiation by His expiatory sacrifice.
- 3) 'Hilaskomai' meaning 'to make propitiation', *Luke 18:13*. God is able to show mercy towards the repentant sinner because of the sacrifice of Christ. See also *Hebrews 2:17*.

Main Points

1. God's holiness is satisfied by the sacrifice of the sinless Son of God.

Christ alone is worthy to make propitiation.

Christ alone is the place of propitiation.

a) Christ alone is able to make propitiation because of who He is.

He alone is worthy,

In the book of Revelation Christ alone is worthy to redeem His people. *Revelation 5:9-10 'And they sung a new song, saying, You art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for You were slain, and has redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.'*

Christ was worthy to be an offering for sin. Not just because He was without sin but because of who He is.

He is able to be our propitiation because He is the sinless (1) Son of God and (2) the Son of Man.

Question: Why is the blood of Christ our propitiation?

The blood satisfies God's requirements because

(1) Christ is able to stand in the place of the sinner as our substitute.

(2) The wrath of God towards sin is appeased by the worthy sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Peter wrote about the value of the blood, *1 Peter 1:18-19 'Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:'*

b) Christ our propitiation - the place of mercy.

The same word that is translated propitiation is translated as 'mercy seat' (Greek Hilasterion). *Hebrews 9:5 'And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.'*

The mercy seat was the cover or the lid of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

Atonement (Hebrew *Kaphar* meaning 'a covering') was made at the mercy seat.

The blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement (*Leviticus 16*).

God's holiness is satisfied by the sacrifice of the blood and God is able to propitiate (show mercy towards) the sinner.

Jesus was referring to this when He told His disciples that *'no man comes to the Father but by me'*. (*John 14:6b*)

He is the place of mercy.

2. The blood satisfies God's justice

Christ is the means of propitiation. *1 John 2:2, 'And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world.'*

Christ identifies Himself with the sinner, He is able to be the substitutionary sacrifice.

The propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God is the expression of God's love for us. *1 John 4:10, 'Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son the propitiation for our sins.'*

The love of God is not due to anything good in us, *Romans 5:8 'But God commends his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.'* *Christ gave Himself for us while we were still sinners.*

He loved us knowing that through His death and resurrection we can be changed into His likeness. *John 1:12 'But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:'*

The propitiatory sacrifice of Jesus is both vicarious and expiatory.

Christ was able to be the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice on our behalf because He became like us.

a) A vicarious sacrifice (on behalf of another).

The eternal Son of God identified Himself with His people by becoming man and took the place of the sinner on the cross.

The sinner is taken from death (crucified with Christ) to new life (risen with Christ).

b) An expiatory sacrifice (pay the penalty).

The demands of the law were met through the shedding of blood, *Hebrews 9:22, 'And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.'*

The blood of Christ is the means of propitiation.

Sin is covered by the blood. (*Psalms 32:1*).

The wrath of God towards sin is propitiated by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The penalty for sin has been paid in full.

3. He is able to be merciful.

He shows lovingkindness towards the sinner who trusts in Him.

Christ is able to make propitiation to all those who call upon Him.

The blood is able to save the 'whosoever'. 'Hilaskomai' meaning 'to make propitiation'.

a) God delights in mercy.

Micah 7:18 'Who is a God like unto You, that pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retains not his anger for ever, because he delights in mercy.'

The Lord is able to show mercy towards the repentant sinner because of the sacrifice of the cross.

It is His nature to show mercy but His holiness demands that He is just to show mercy.

The Psalmist wrote of the lovingkindness of the Lord,
Psalm 63:3 'Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise you.'

b) The tax collector cries out 'be propitious to me'.

Luke 18:13, 'And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.'

The tax collector called upon the Lord to be merciful.

There was no thought of self righteousness.

He knew he was a sinner without hope of saving himself.

The tax collector went away justified because he trusted in Christ alone for mercy.

The Pharisee in this story could not receive forgiveness because he trusted in his own self righteousness.

The gospel is to the whosoever.

Many people come to Christ in prison. Those who have been brought lowest are the most ready to call upon the Lord for mercy.

c) The eternal Son of God became man and identified Himself with us.

This is why He is able to be our High Priest and offer Himself for our sins.

Hebrews 2:17 'Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.'

The wisdom and the greatness of God is revealed through the Gospel.

God is able to show mercy to those who call upon Him in faith because of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God upon the cross.

Summary:

Propitiation reveals both the wrath of God towards sin and the love of God for the sinner.

Propitiation is necessary because of the holiness of God.

Christ is able to make propitiation because...

- 1) ...the blood is of great value. The sinless Son of God became the Son of Man and gave His life for us.
- 2) ...His sacrifice on the cross is both vicarious (on behalf of another) and expiatory (to pay the penalty for sin).
- 3) ...it meets all the legal requirements of the law, and God is shown to be just in justifying His people.