



Lesson 4: God's Provision for Salvation

The Cross Work of Jesus Christ

Part 2

“Christ Our Propitiation”

Theme: How is God able to hate our sin and save us at the same time? How can love, justice, and divine vindication be combined into one work of the cross? Only in the cross work of Christ can love and justice meet.

Introduction: Someone must pay for the sins we have committed! It is either for the sinner to pay or as the gospel says “Jesus Christ died for our sins.” Sacrificial substitution under the penalty of God was done for us in the death of Jesus Christ. Now we turn to another aspect of His death.

Propitiation – Defined: “to escape the righteous wrath of God through a satisfactory payment to God Himself---to appease the outraged holiness of God and His demands that the soul that sins shall die.”

“The doctrine of propitiation is precisely this: that God loved the objects of His wrath so much He gave His own Son to the end that He by His blood should make provision for the removal of His wrath. It was Christ’s so to deal with the wrath that the loved would no longer be the objects of wrath, and love would achieve its aim of making the children of wrath the children of God’s good pleasure.” (John Murray, The Atonement, p. 15 cited in Knowing God, Packer J. I., p. 185.)

Propitiation is that which quenches God’s wrath against us by obliterating our sins from his sight (*expiation—covered by blood—see Leviticus 17:11; 1 Peter 3:18*) and at the same time satisfies all the just demands of God against our sins.

Let us consider briefly the following:

1. God’s wrath and anger about sin
2. Pagan concept of propitiation
3. Biblical meaning and New Testament scriptures:

Romans 3:23-25

Hebrews 2:17

1 John 2:1-2

1 John 4:10

God’s Wrath Towards Sin

The wrath of God in Romans Chapter 1 is the reason the gospel brings good news to sinners. God has done something about our sin that makes Him righteously angry with us; Romans 1:16-18; 2:5; 3:23-25.

God cannot overlook our sins and remain just. God is not just a loving God but He is also a holy God who cannot look with favor on that which is opposed to Him.

God hates sin: Zechariah 8:16

God not only hates sin but hates those who commit the sin:

“The Lord tests the righteous, but His soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence” Psalm 11:5, see v. 6 where he *rains coals of fire on the wicked*.

Revelation 21:8

Jeremiah 44:4

God’s people are to have the same attitude as God towards evil: “O you that love the Lord, hate evil,” Psalm 97:10.

God’s wrath is presently being expressed to the world of mankind in which He is “giving sinners up” to sin; Romans 1:18-33. Sinners are born as **objects of divine wrath**; Ephesians 2:1-3; John 3:36; John 8:44; Romans 5:10; Revelation 21:8. A death sentence hangs over every individual from the time of their birth until physical death and the possibility of eternal separation from God.

The Pagan Concept of Propitiation

Pagan religions viewed their gods as angry. In order to pacify the gods or to get them into a “good mood”, devotees would bring sacrifices. Israel followed these pagan practices by offering their firstborn sons to pagan gods such as Dagon and Molech (see Jeremiah). Pagan sacrifices were used as bribery to get the gods to be favorable.

Jeremiah reminded Israel that it never entered God’s mind to ask them to sacrifice their children to appease Him. He had instructed them how to deal with their sins in the sacrificial system; Leviticus 17:11.

God’s promise to bring a Messiah included the sin-bearing to be accomplished by the Messiah (Isaiah 53:5-12). Most of Israel remains blind to this glorious truth that their Messiah would be God giving the sacrifice that would satisfy Himself and not some animal or a firstborn child. God so loved the world that He gave His Son for our sins, John 3:16.

Propitiation Accomplishes Four Things

Propitiation in the Old Testament was used of the atonement or *covering* for sin.

(1) Propitiation was in reference to sin; (2) the effect of this *propitiation/covering* is cleansing and forgiveness; and (3) it is before the Lord that the covering and its effect take place; cf. Leviticus 4:35; 10:17; 16:30.

Propitiation is used four times in the New Testament:

Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; and 4:10.

1. **Propitiation enables God to justify sinners and remain righteous**; Romans 3:23-25.
2. **Propitiation was the reason for the incarnation**; Hebrews 2:17.
3. **Propitiation is the basis for our forgiveness and Christ’s priestly ministry as advocate and mediator**; 1 John 1:8-2:2.
4. **Propitiation is the provision of God’s love**; 1 John 4:10.

God Himself provided the Lamb. God Himself gave for us what we could never provide to quench His anger towards us; see Leviticus 17:11.

No one but God the Father could provide any satisfaction for His righteous outrage towards us. Our stubborn rebellion would deserve eternal punishment unless there was another way.

There is a way other than going to eternal destruction.

The gospel offers the other way to escape the wrath of God; Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:4, 8-9; Romans 8:1.

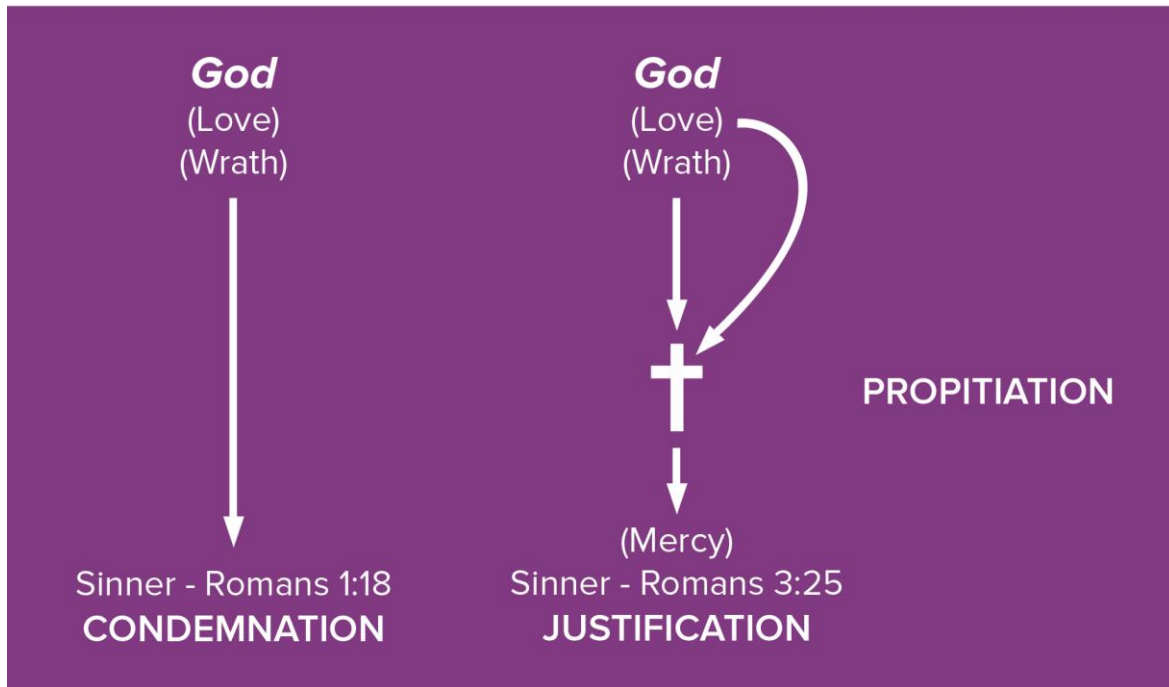
Consider these great hymns that captured this message:

*“Bearing shame and scoffing rude
In my place condemned He stood;
Sealed my pardon with His blood;
Hallelujah! What a Savior!”*

*“If Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of wrath divine,
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,
And then again at mine.”*

*“Turn then, my soul, unto thy rest;
The merits of thy great High Priest
Have bought thy liberty.
Trust in His efficacious blood,
Nor fear thy banishment from God,
Since Jesus died for thee!”*

THE NATURE OF SALVATION AT THE CROSS



Next Week Lesson 5: We will consider how the death of Jesus Christ redeemed and reconciled us to God.



Break Out Session – Lesson 4

Group Discussion Background

In each of our break out sessions we will probe three aspects of the truths presented during each class through a series of discussion questions as described below.

WHAT: What is the key informational content?

SO WHAT: What is the implication of this information? Or said another way, why is the truth of this information important?

WHAT NOW: How will you apply this truth or what will you do now that you know this truth?

Our goal for these classes is not simply to increase our knowledge, but for lives to be transformed by truth. (Romans 12:2)

Discussion Questions: (25 minutes)

Ask the group the following questions and allow the group to thoroughly explore and discuss each one.

1. What does the word propitiation mean?
2. What were some of the concepts of propitiation that came from the world?
3. Based on the discussion and the following passages (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2; and 1 John 4:10,) propitiation accomplished what four things?
4. According to Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:4, 8-9; Romans 8:1, what way did God provide to escape his wrath?
5. So, for what and on whom does God's wrath and anger rest? How does this affect you?
6. How will the truth of propitiation affect your worship, your walk and your witness this week?

Time to Care – Share – Bear (15 minutes)

During this time, the group is encouraged to share in each other's lives and demonstrate care for one another by bearing one another up through prayer.

Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

Answer any remaining questions and clarify the homework for the following week.



Lesson 4 Homework

1. How do the teachings of I Peter 1:18 along with I Corinthians 6:15-20 influence you to use your body?
2. Please describe the characteristics of a Kinsman-Redeemer. What are the three qualifications a kinsman-redeemer had to meet?
3. How did God reconcile His enemies to Himself? Give at least two key passages in the New Testament that teaches reconciliation?
4. Memorize: 2 Corinthians 5:21