

Lesson 32

Praising God for Propitiation

... (Christ), whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. - Rom 3:25

“Has the word propitiation any place in your Christianity? In the faith of the New Testament it is central. The love of God, the taking of human form by the Son, the meaning of the cross, Christ's heavenly intercession, the way of salvation—all are to be explained in terms of it and any explanation from which the thought of propitiation is missing will be incomplete, and indeed actually misleading, by New Testament standards... Were I asked to focus the New Testament message in three words, my proposal would be ADOPTION THROUGH PROPITIATION, and I do not expect ever to meet a richer or more pregnant summary of the gospel than that.”

J.I. Packer

“If we cannot claim to live sinless lives, then the only thing that can keep us from despairing before a holy God is that we have an Advocate in heaven and He pleads our case not on the basis of our perfection but of His propitiation.” John Piper

“Propitiation presupposes the wrath of God and displeasure of God, and the purpose of propitiation is the removal of this displeasure. Very simply stated the doctrine of propitiation means that Christ propitiated the wrath of God and rendered God propitious to his people. . .”
John Murray

The wrong that man had done to the Divine Majesty, should be expiated by none but man, and could be by none but God. Puritan John Howe

“...If our faith stops in his [Jesus Christ] life, and does not fasten upon his blood, it will not be a justifying faith. His miracles, which prepared the world for his doctrine, and his holiness, which fitted himself for his suffering, would have been insufficient for us without the addition of the Cross. Without this, we had been under the demerit of our crimes, the venom of our natures, the slavery of our sins, and the tyranny of the devil; without this, we should forever have had God for our enemy, and Satan for our executioner; without this, we had lain groaning under the punishment of our transgressions, and despaired of any smile from heaven. It was this death as a sacrifice that appeased God and as a price redeemed us. Nothing is so strong to encourage us; nothing so powerful to purify us; how can we be without thinking of it? ...”
Puritan Stephan Charnock

In Lesson 31, we looked at what may very well be the highest privilege of the gospel the believer: being adopted as sons of God and becoming heirs with Christ. In this lesson, we continue to strengthen our theological roots, so to speak, by examining how God made our

adoption possible. We will look at how God's wrath towards man's sin had to be satisfied before we could become his children. This could only have been accomplished through the substitutionary death of his Son, Jesus Christ.

PART I

1. Read Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; 1 Jn 2:2 and 4:10 and see what unusual theological word is repeated in all of these verses (ESV)?
2. What can we learn about propitiation from these verses?
3. Look up the modern definition of propitiation/to propitiate. Is this how the Bible defines propitiation?
4. Look back at Rom 3:23-25 and explain what correlation there is between propitiation and redemption and justification?
5. Also, see Rom 3:25 and state who drives or provides propitiation: man or God (See also 4:10)?
6. What does it mean when scripture says "that God put forward" in Rom 3:25 and "God sent forth" in 1 Jn 4:10?
7. Is it ever possible for man to propitiate or appease God? Defend your answer from Scripture. How has this kind of thinking spread into the minds of modern Christianity, or better yet, why?
8. What does the phrase in Rom 3:25 "by his blood" mean?

9. Now, look at Hebrews 2:17 and see if there is anything else we can learn about propitiation from this verse and especially its context?

10. What was a priest's primary job and what did he incessantly do as it relates to man and God? See 1 Jn 2:2 and 4:10 and see what connection sin plays in these verses as well as Rom 3:23-26 and Heb 2:17.

11. Man's sin brings what from God? Look at the context that builds up to Rom 3:21-26.

12. Consider Rom 3:19, 3:6, 3:5, 2:6-11, 2:5, 1:18 and what is being brought upon man because of his sin? If you have any questions look at Rom 5:9; 1 Thess 1:10, 5:9; Jn 3:36! Thus, what or who is man ultimately saved from, and how does "propitiation" fit into this reality?

PART II

13. Look up Nahum 1:2-3 and see what word or concept is repeated multiple times in these verses.

14. How often does Scripture speak of God's wrath? Read these verses and see what instigates God's holy hatred: Ex 32:7-10; Zech 8:16-17; Ps 5:4-6, 11:5-7; Ps 78:21-22; Lam 3:42-45; Jos 22:18; Isa 66:15-17; Ps 88:7,16; Ezek 5:15-17, 9:8, 14:19-21!

15. Is the anger and subsequent judgment of God simply an Old Testament concept? Has God and His ways changed in the NT? Support your answer biblically. Here are a few verses that might help: Mt 3:7; Lk 12:4-5; Jn 3:36; Rom 1:18, 2:5, 5:9, 9:22; Eph 2:3, 5:6; Col 3:6; 1 Thess 1:10, 2:26, 5:9; Heb 3:15, 4:3, 12:28-29, Rev 6:16, 14:9-11.

16. Is God jealous and if so what does that mean (Ex 20:5, 34:6-7,14 Now, go to Ex 32:7-10; 34:6-7, 14; Deut 4:24, 6:15, 32:16; Josh 24:19; I Kings 14:22; Ezek 16:38; Zeph 1:18; 1 Cor 10:22)?
17. What or who is God jealous for? Ezek 39:25 with Isa 42:8 & 48:11; Zech 1:14, 8:1-2; 2 Cor 11:2
18. Is there any connection between jealousy and zeal (Isa 9:6; Ps 69:9; Jn 2:17)?
19. Consider Elijah's zeal for the Lord (1 Kings 19:10) and Phinias (Num 25:11,13) and Paul (Acts 20:24) and Christ (Jn 2:17)! What were they all zealous for (Jn 4:34)? What does all this have to do with you (Titus 2:14)? Are jealous for God? Do you hate what God hates? Are zealous for His praise or yours?
20. Consider Numbers 16:41-50 and 25:1-9. What do you see from these examples as it relates to the wrath of God being kindled and being stopped? What connection is there between propitiation and reconciliation? Hint: see Col 1:21-22.
21. How does propitiation all point to and flow out of God's amazing love, even for His enemies? See Rom 5:8; 8:31-39; 2 Cor 5:14-21; 1 Jn 4:7-11,19!

How does a better or right understanding of propitiation equip you and encourage you to train yourself to godliness?