

## **Propitiation**

(Rom 3:25)

- Read section (Rom 3:21-31)
- Division: Rom 3:21-24 (general) and 3:25-31 (details)

Rom 3:25-26 begins a description of the characteristics of the “redemption that is in Christ Jesus”

I. Rom 3:25- **How** our salvation was worked out by God

A) Matt 26:39- “Father, if there be any other way...”

1. Rom 3:26- Says there is no other way

B) God’s method of salvation is always hated by man and is the central theme of the attacks of the devil

1. The world hates “blood atonement”

2. It is always the justification of the sinner by the death of Christ that man’s religions reject

i. Consider the “Higher Criticism” and Rom 3:25 in this regard

a) They made “propitiation” to be “expiation”

1) Propitiation- “the act of appeasing wrath, reconciling the favor of the offended party” (pro- “before”)

2) Expiation- “The canceling of a crime, the removal of guilt” (ex- “out from, away from”)

C) Propitiation/mercyseat

1. “Propitiation” found here and in 1 John 2:2 and 4:10 (John uses different form of this word)

2. Heb 9:5- “Mercyseat” is same word as in Rom 3:25 (also same word used in LXX for “mercyseat”)

i. Luke 18:13- “Be *merciful* to me a sinner”

3. Many argue that the word should have been translated as “mercyseat” in Rom 3:25

i. But why would Paul bring in a technical term relating to the tabernacle out of the context in this passage? Translators rightly made it “propitiation”

4. Ex 25:10-22- The Mercyseat (“I will meet thee there”)

i. Mercyseat is where and how God met man in O/T

a) Gen 3:24- Cherubims to keep or guard “the way”

b) Rom 3:25- “Set forth”- to reveal, to manifest, to openly declare

1) This is the explanation of the “but now” of Rom 3:21

- 2) God has made a way whereby guilty man can be brought into relationship with a the Holy God
  - (a) This is what Calvary and the cross are, they are God's open and public declaration
  - (b) Gal 3:1- "evidently set forth" (same word as in Rom 3:25)
    - (1) Rom 3:25- It is by "propitiation" and "blood"
- ii. Only one man could approach God via the mercyseat, and that by blood
  - a) The mercyseat itself is not a type of Christ, the High Priest and the sacrifice were types of Him, but the mercyseat is a type or picture of "the way" which God Himself had foreordained
    - 1) Rom 3:25- "Whom God hath set forth"
      - (a) Acts Acts 2:23- Determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God
      - (b) Rev 13:8- Lamb slain from foundation of world
- iii. The ark/mercyseat where the center of all Israel and their tabernacle
  - a) The work of the Lord Jesus Christ on behalf of His church is the center and subject of all the scripture, as well as the history of the world
  - b) The Mercyseat is a foreshadowing of the "how" a righteous God could save sinful men
    - 1) 1 Pet 1:10-13- Even the angels did not understand this
5. John Owens "four elements of propitiation"
  - i. There must be an offense to be removed
  - ii. There must be an offended party to be placated
  - iii. There must be an offending party
  - iv. There must be a means of appeasement or payment made to bring about reconciliation
- II. Rom 3:26- **Why** our salvation had to be by this way
  - A) Rom 1:18-3:26 is still focused on the wrath of God rightly falling upon every man
    1. "Modern man" rejects the idea of God's wrath and thus they want to change the wording of our text and the meaning of the words, and thus remove the entire idea of God's needing to be "placated"
      - i. Take away this truth, and we have no bible and no Savior
  - B) To reject God's wrath against sin is to reject His righteousness
    1. God's wrath is not hot violence, or reactionary as man's is, it is instead a result of His perfect holiness and righteousness
      - i. God's wrath- "His settled opposition to all that is evil due to His Own righteous nature" (example of magnets)
  - C) Rejection of wrath is due to a wrong definition of "sin"

1. Sin- is separation from God, sin lies between man and God and prevents man from being in a right relationship to God
  - i. Sin cannot simply be set aside or canceled out, the righteousness of God can't allow that
    - a) Isa 53:11- God must be "satisfied"
      - 1) The cross is God's declaration of His Own remedy whereby He could be justly and rightly "satisfied" or "appeased" or "propitiated"
  - ii. Because man is "separated" from the Holy God, He MUST have an Advocate
    - a) 1 John 2:1-2- Christ our Advocate
    - b) Job 9:32-35- Man MUST have a Daysman
      - 1) John 3:16- "Expiation" does not show forth the love of God in any way near to which "propitiation" does
  - iii. The Modernists refuse the idea that they are separated from God, therefore they refuse "propitiation" and both are caused by a wrong idea concerning God and His nature
    - a) The pagan religions have a better understanding of "propitiation" than do the Modernists/Humanists
      - 1) They build upon Greek Philosophy, which says "wrath in a man is a bad trait, how much worse would it be in God"
      - 2) Rom 3:24- The very word "redemption" forces the use of "propitiation"
    - b) God is not simply "a God of love" Who has changed His mind concerning man, this would require a change in His perfect nature
      - 1) God does not need to be "persuaded" nor does our Advocate "argue" for us at His right hand
        - (a) Our Advocate is "God's declaration set forth by Him"
        - (b) God is manifesting Himself to us, His wrath and perfect hatred of sin as well as His love and perfect remedy for His children
          - (1) The pillar of fire (which came out and struck Nadab and Abihu) did not disappear when atonement was made
          - (2) Read William Cowper (saved by Rom 3:25) hymn "There Is A Fount"