

The Father Satisfied

The Doctrine of Propitiation

The Words Involved

- A. *hilosmos* (noun) – SN 2434 The basic meaning of the word is “satisfaction.”
- B. *hilasterion* (noun) – SN 2435 This word is used in Hebrews 9:5 of the “mercy seat” which covered the ark of the covenant in the Old Testament Tabernacle and Temple. It refers not so much to the satisfactory sacrifice as to the application of that sacrifice through the ministry of the Levitical priest.
- C. **The Passages Analyzed**
- D. 1 John 4:10 – The sending of the Son by the Father to be the propitiation for sins is the specific act whereby God expresses His love for mankind. *See John 3:16.*
- E. 1 John 2:1, 2
 - 1. Christ’s absolute righteousness makes not only His advocacy, but His propitiation possible.
 - 2. Righteousness is defined as “doing every thing right.” It is righteousness that is the attribute of God, not sinlessness, because righteousness, being the broader term, includes sinlessness.
 - 3. The extent of Christ’s propitiation includes not only the sins of believers, but the sins of the whole world.
- F. Romans 3:25
 - 1. Not “propitiation” (*hilosmos* – SN 2434) but “that which satisfies” (*hilasterion* – SN 2435). Christ is viewed here not simply as the sacrifice, but as the person who satisfies God’s requirements through His sacrifice. In effect, Romans 3:25 is teaching that unless a person limits his faith to the person who completely satisfies God’s requirements, he is not truly a believer. Contextually, Paul is distinguishing between justification by faith vs. justification by works. If Christ is the satisfaction that God demands, no further act or work on the part of the individual can be added so as to produce redemption and justification.
 - 2. When used of the Lord Jesus Christ, this word implies the application of the satisfactory sacrifice so as to produce redemption, and then, by faith, justification. Such application of a satisfactory sacrifice is limited to Christ’s work “through His blood,” a phrase that, by metonymy, refers to Christ’s death.

The Meaning Explained

Propitiation is the act of Christ on the cross by which He satisfied the holy requirement of God in paying the penalty for the sins of all mankind. The doctrine includes the fact that Christ’s sacrifice is the exclusive sacrifice, and that no further work can be added to it to satisfy God’s requirement.