

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 9:50 a.m.
Assembly 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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This Week's Question:

What man's assassination caused eighty men to come to Jerusalem with torn clothes and offerings of grain and incense?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

Esther - Esther 8:3

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Propitiation

Ken Marrs

In the New Testament, we find the Son of God called a "propitiation" 3 times (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10) and in the New King James Version (Hebrews 2:17) the word is used to describe what the Son of God would do with the sins of the people.

Propitiation Defined

What does this strange word mean? Webster's New 20th Century Dictionary defines "propitiate" as "to cause to become favorably inclined; to win or regain the good will of; to appease or conciliate." In the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, William Carver tells us our word "propitiation" is Latin in its origin and its meaning incorporated the atmosphere of heathen rites for winning the favor, or averting the anger of the gods. In the LXX (Greek translation of Hebrew Old Testament) and Greek manuscripts, we find three forms of the same word that are so translated "propitiation" by one or more versions of the New Testament:

1. Hilasmos (1 John 2:2; 4:10) is a noun defined as "an appeasing" (Thayer) or "expiation" (Bagster) or "a means whereby sin is covered and remitted" (Vine).

2. *Hilaskomai* (Luke 18:13; Hebrews 2:17) is a verb defined as “1) ... to appease, conciliate to one’s self ... be gracious, be merciful ... 2) to expiate ...” (Thayer).

The Greeks used *hilaskomai* to mean the appeasing or soothing of the gods, as well as the conciliation of an injured man to and by the offender (Liddell & Scott). W. E. Vine says the word was used among the Greeks who considered the good will of the gods as something not a part of their natural attitude but something to be earned first.

However, in the Greek scriptures “It is never used of any act whereby man brings God into a favourable attitude or gracious disposition. It is God who is propitiated by the vindication of His holy and righteous character ... through the ... expiatory sacrifice of Christ”

3. *Hilasterion* (Romans 3:25; Hebrews 9:5) is used in the LXX uses it at least 17 times, translating it “propitiatory” or “mercy-seat.” It too is defined by New Testament lexicons as an appeasing, expiating or placating.

We see the basic idea of “propitiation” as an act or gesture rendered by man to God to facilitate a reconciliation. Evidently, the Greeks saw the act of propitiation as a means to prompt change in their gods. In the New Testament we see just the opposite. God does not change. He has always been displeased with sin and will not tolerate anything less than complete and perfect righteousness. If there is to be any reconciliation between God and man it will not come by an excuse of unrighteousness. God will not alter His nature or lower His standard to accommodate man’s sinfulness. So what can a man do to be saved?

CHRIST THE PROPITIATION

In the Old Covenant, the High Priest could not enter the Most Holy Place without blood (Hebrews 9:7). On the day of atonement, the High Priest would pour the blood out on the mercy seat (Leviticus 16:15). The mercy seat was the lid or covering to the Ark of the Covenant. Being the symbolic

throne and presence of God, it was also where God would meet and speak with Moses (Exodus 25:21, 22).

Interestingly, the LXX uses *hilasterion* (Exodus 25:17; 37:6) in connection with the lid of the Ark. In addition, most scholars translate the same word in Hebrews 9:5 “mercy seat.” A. T. Robertson states the difference between its use in Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:5: “Here the adjective *hilasterios* has to mean mercy seat, the place, not the propitiatory gift, or propitiation, as in Romans 3:25.”

The idea being that Christ not only symbolically brings His own blood to the place where God would commune with man, but Christ Himself becomes the means whereby the sins of mankind are covered or hidden by His expiatory sacrifice. Jesus comes to the mercy seat and then He becomes the mercy seat.

As our High Priest, Christ is our only means of approaching the Most High God (John 14:6). As the divinely appointed propitiation, Jesus washes us in His blood and then takes that blood to the throne of God. Because it is the blood of a pure and righteous life, God readily accepts this blood as the only true agent of conciliation. As the propitiation, the blood of Christ not only provides access, but divine acceptance.

Salvation comes from a reconciliation, that reconciliation comes from a propitiation (appeasement), and that propitiation can only come from the blood of the Son of God.

Propitiation ... there can be no salvation without it.

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