

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SATISFY GOD?

Intro: What we talk about satisfying God in connection with salvation we are concerned with the doctrine of propitiation.

In his Theology and in his classroom teaching Dr. Chafer had a unique way of showing the relationship between three Biblical terms: redemption, which is toward sin; reconciliation, which is toward man; propitiation, which is toward God.

And then he would point out that "they together form what is properly termed the finished work of Christ" (III, 96).

When we understand the meaning of these terms we are beginning to understand what the doctrine of salvation includes.

Propitiation is a doctrine which has to do with God. The word basically means to make a person favorably inclined toward another. It means that God has been satisfied with respect to His righteousness. He has not set aside judgment for the sinner, but all of the righteous demands of His law have been met and so He is free to manifest His love for sinners. The fact that God's love for man preceded propitiation is wonderfully brought out by 1 John 4:10,

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Regardless of how much God might love us, He could not be merciful to us until His wrath against our sin had been appeased. This could only be done by the carrying out of His judgment upon sin.

In addition to 1 John 4:10 there are 5 other verses that we are concerned with in learning what the Bible teaches about what it takes to satisfy God, or, to state it another way, to make Him propitious. They are:

- 1) Rom. 3:25.
 - 2) Heb. 2:17.
 - 3) Heb. 8:12.
 - 4) Heb. 9:5.
 - 5) 1 John 2:2.
- (Read each one.)

What are the important things that we learn about satisfying God about our sins from these verses?

- I. Basic to everything else that is said is this: IT IS A WORK OF GOD, NOT A WORK OF MAN.

You have this in 1 John 4:10,

"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

Note also Rom. 3:25a,

"Whom (speaking of Christ Jesus from v. 24) God hath set forth to be a propitiation . . ."

IT IS UTTERLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANY MAN TO SATISFY GOD AND MAKE HIM PROPITIOUS. This is where we must start in Scripture if we want to know how to be saved.

- II. From the same two verses above (1 John 4:10 and Rom. 3:25) plus what we find a second very important point: GOD HAS BEEN SATISFIED THROUGH CHRIST.

This might seem very elementary to many of us, but there are many, many people who have missed this.

A. Read Rom. 3:24, 25.

B. Read 1 John 4:10.

C. Read 1 John 2:2,
"And He (Christ) is the propitiation . . ."

D. Read Heb. 2:17,
"Wherefore, in all things it behooved him (Christ) to be made like his brethren . . . to make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

But to be perfectly clear there is one other thing that we need to say about Christ:

III. CHRIST HAS SATISFIED GOD BY HIS DEATH.

At this point I want to go back to Heb. 9:5 where the writer of Hebrews is mentioning (in the preceding verses of Heb. 9) the various pieces of furniture that went into the Tabernacle. He concludes with v. 5,

"And over it (i.e., the ark of the covenant) the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat," i.e., the propitiatory -- the place where God was satisfied temporarily in OT times through sacrifices that pointed to Christ.

Here is God's own illustration of this great doctrine of propitiation!

Get the picture! It was the mercy seat which in type

kept the cherubim from seeing the Law which had been broken, and it was the mercy seat which "shut out the testimony of the law against the sins of the people" (Hodge, II, 478). (The first of the two above ideas is quoted by Chafer of Scofield in Vol. III, p. 94).

And what does the mercy seat represent? CHRIST!

And what was placed on the mercy seat? The blood of the sacrifices -- picturing the blood of Christ.

Now note the clear teaching of Rom. 3:25,
 "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation . . .
in His blood."

In other words, He satisfied God by dying for our sins.

Many are the related Scriptures that deal with this great truth.

- 1) 1 Cor. 15:3, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures."
- 2) Heb. 10:12, 14, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God . . . For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are (lit., being) sanctified."
- 3) Rom. 5:8, 9, "But God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."

Two points remain. Let me present them as questions.

IV. HOW INCLUSIVE IS THIS PROPITIATION?

The answer must be twofold:

- 1) First, with respect to people.
- 2) Second, with respect to sins.

Let us just use the two passages in 1 John. This is what we find:

- 1) In 1 John 4:10 Christ is the propitiation for the sins of those of us who have received Christ -- with special emphasis upon the sins we committed before we were saved.
- 2) In 1 John 2:2 Christ ^{which} is the propitiation for the sins ^{commits} ~~at~~ the believer ^{after} he has been saved!
- 3) But just to show that it is not only for believers we read that "He is the propitiation . . . for the sins of the whole world."

NOTE: There is no limitation as to people, nor is there

any limitation as to sins!

Through the death of Jesus Christ God has been satisfied so that He can forgive the sins of all men both before and after they are saved -- or if they never are! There is nothing to stand in the way of any man's salvation.

Finally . . .

V. HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

For our answer let us turn again to Rom. 3:25 and read the verse before it and the verse after it. (Read.)

The word which gives us our answer is the word, "justified."

The atmosphere in this passage and the words are forensic, having to do with law and courts. Man is a sinner. As such he is under divine judgment with the sentence of death upon him. Christ took his place and died for his sins. Whenever man receives Christ as his Savior, that man is declared righteous in God's sight. The account is settled, and can never even be called up for review again. Cf. John 5:24.

Add to this the fact that the death of Christ has rendered God propitious toward even the sins that I commit as a believer AND YOU CAN SEE THAT THERE IS NO END TO THIS WONDERFUL TRUTH. IT IS JUST AS ETERNAL AS THE SALVATION OF WHICH IT IS A PART.

Concl: Our word is found again in Luke 18:13 in the prayer of the publican. It should be translated,
God be propitious to me the sinner.

GOD IS PROPITIOUS. God is favorably inclined to the sinner, not just because He loves the sinner, but because Christ died in the sinner's place and satisfied all that God in His righteousness must demand. No man can understand the Gospel or preach the Gospel who does not understand this!

What does it take to satisfy God about my sins? Just one thing: Faith in Jesus Christ who died in my place that God might be favorably inclined to forgive me of my sins.

Do you know Him as your Savior? If so, you should praise Him. If not, you should trust Him now.

Charles Hodge says: "It follows from the perfection of Christ's satisfaction that it supersedes and renders impossible all other satisfactions for sin" (II, 484).