

PROPIITIATION -- Scripture passages:

Romans 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of the sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."

Concerning this translation Vine says (III, 224),

" . . . the R.V. text and punctuation in this verse are important: 'whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood.' The phrase 'by His blood' is to be taken in immediate connection with 'propitiation.' Christ, through His expiatory death, is the Personal means by whom God shows the mercy of His justifying grace to the sinner who believes. His 'blood' stands for the voluntary giving up of His life, by the shedding of His blood in expiatory sacrifice, under Divine judgment righteously due to us as sinners, faith being the sole condition on man's part."

Hebrews 2:17: "Wherefore, in all things it behooved him to be made like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation (lit., propitiation) for the sins of the people."

Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins . . . will I remember no more."

Hebrews 9:5: "And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat; of which we cannot now speak particularly."

This verse establishes a connection between "the mercy seat" on the ark of the covenant and the doctrine of propitiation. Also the word used here in the Greek text is the same word used in Ex. 25:18, 19, 20, 21, 22 in the LXX.

1 John 2:2: "And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

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."

Luke 18:13: "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."

See Dr. Chafer's comments in Vol. III, pp. 95, 96.

6/29/14

## PROPTIATION

We are concerned with 4 Greek words:

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1) ἱλασμός - Luke 18:13

Heb. 2:17

- It means "to render propitious to one's self, to appease, conciliate to one's self" (Shayer, 301).
- A + B (p. 376) have it, to "be propitiated, be merciful or gracious... Have mercy on me, sinner that I am... to expiate the sins of the people."
- Vine:

"It is never used of any act whereby man brings God into a favorable attitude or gracious disposition. It is God who is propitiated by the vindication of His holy and righteous character, whereby, through the provision He has made in the vicarious and expiatory sacrifice of Christ, He has so dealt with sin that He can shew mercy to the believing sinner in the removal of his guilt and the remission of his sins" (III, 223).

- Two dictionary definitions:

- 1) Propitious: "favorably inclined" (Random House, 1153). To propitiate is "to make favorably inclined; appease, conciliate" (Ibid.).
- 2) Expiate: "to atone for; make amends or reparation for" (Random House, 502). An expiation is the means by which atonement or satisfaction is made.

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2) ἱλαστήριος - "an appeasing, propitiating" or "the means of appeasing, a propitiation" (Shayer, 301).

It is used only 2x in the NT - both by John: 1 John 2:2  
1 John 4:10

This is the word which sets forth

"the benefits of the death of Christ" (Trench, 295). He not only propitiates God but He is Himself the propitiation. This is the teaching of the book of Hebrews. He is both Priest and Sacrifice.

Related passages:\*

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|------------------|-------------|
| 1) Eph. 5:2.     | } Sacrifice |
| 2) Heb. 10:14.   |             |
| 3) 1 Cor. 5:7.   |             |
| 4) John 1:29, 36 | } Lamb      |
| 5) 1 Pet. 1:19   |             |
| 6) Rev. 5:6, 8   |             |

7) Rev. 1:5. Blood

\* Trench, 294

Older translations (cf. Trench, 293) have "to make agreement," or, "He obtaineth grace," or "the obtainer of mercy."

\* 3) Ἰλαστήριος - Heb. 9:5

Rom. 3:25

This is ~~not~~ "a means of appeasing or expiating, a propitiation" (Shayer, 301).

In the LXX this word is used for "the mercy seat" in passages like Ex. 25:18, 19, 20, 21, 22. "This is its use in Heb. 9:5" (Vine, III, 224).

\* 4) Ἰλέως - Heb. 8:12.

Mt. 16:22.

This means "propitious, merciful" (Shayer, p. 301). man finds God merciful. Cf. Jer. 31:34.

NOTES:

- 1) God's love and divine propitiation must be distinguished. Propitiation does not create God's love, but it makes it possible for God to be just in exercising His love.

- 2) In the OT divine propitiation is spoken of as covering sin, meaning:
- a) Expiation
  - b) By blood - "not reformation, or good works" (Hodge, II, 478). "This in Hebrew is כִּפָּר, that which covers. The combination of these two ideas led the LXX to call the ~~ark~~ <sup>cover</sup> of the ark ἱλαστήριον, that which covered or shut out the testimony of the law against the sins of the people, and thus rendered God propitious. It was an ἱλαστήριον, however, only because sprinkled with blood." Cf. Hodge, ~~op. cit.~~ <sup>ibid.</sup>

Scotfield says in a similar way "Typically, therefore, the golden lid of the ark was a mercy seat because, in divine righteousness (gold), it 'covered' from the eyes of the cherubim the broken law, while the sprinkled blood 'covered' the worshippers sins" (Quoted in Chafer, III, 94).

- 3) "When redemption, which is toward sin; reconciliation, which is toward man, and propitiation, which is toward God -- all wrought by Christ in His death -- are considered in their specific relation to the unsaved and these three are combined into one doctrine or body of truth, they together form what is properly termed the finished work of Christ" (III, 96, of Chafer's Theology).

- 4) "This perfection of the satisfaction of Christ, as already remarked, is not due to his having suffered either in kind or in degree what the sinner would have been required to endure; but principally to the infinite dignity of his person. . . This is what the Apostle clearly teaches in Hebrews ix. 13, 14: 'For if the blood of bulls and of goats . . . sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through (or with) an eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?' The superior efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ is thus referred to the infinitely superior

dignity of his person.

"It follows from the perfection of Christ's satisfaction that it supersedes and renders impossible all other 'satisfactions for sin' (Hodge, Vol. II, pp. 483, 484).