

# Big Words in the Bible (Part 1): Propitiation

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: Romans 3:21-26

In this series, we are looking at some big words in the Bible. All of them are “big” in terms of importance; but for some of them, we may be unsure of what they mean. In this first lesson, we will be looking at the word propitiation. This helps describe the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and what it means for us.

## The Meaning of the Word

- Greek word – *hilasterion*
- Refers to a sacrifice to appease or satisfy God – would turn His wrath away from those who sinned
- Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross was a propitiatory sacrifice – turned away God’s wrath; provided us an opportunity to be saved

## Understanding the Concept

- There is a sacrifice involved with this (Romans 3:25; cf. John 1:29) – the blood of the sacrifice was shed (Hebrews 9:22, 14; cf. Leviticus 17:11)
- This is to turn away God’s wrath that was justly directed toward man (Ephesians 2:1-7) – this was due to man’s sin (Ephesians 2:3; Romans 6:23)
- This same word is used to describe the “mercy seat” on the ark of the covenant (Hebrews 9:5) – this is where God would meet them (Exodus 25:21-22); this is where the blood of the atonement sacrifice would be sprinkled (Leviticus 16:15); the sacrifice to turn away God’s wrath still required God’s mercy; this is not a “business transaction”
- This is important as it relates to the sacrifice of Christ – it was not an act of “equality,” but mercy; the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), which includes eternal punishment and separation from God in hell; Jesus did not face that (Luke 23:42-43; Acts 2:31, 33); He did not “take our place,” but He certainly died for us

## Understanding This in Context

- All of us were dead in sin (Romans 3:23; cf. Ephesians 2:1, 5) – yet all of us can be saved through faith (Romans 3:21-22); God shows no partiality (Acts 10:34-35)
- We are justified as a gift by His grace (Romans 3:24) – not deserved; we deserve death (Romans 6:23), but we have been saved by grace (Ephesians 2:5, 8)
- Jesus shed His blood on the cross as a “propitiation” for us (Romans 3:25) – demonstrates God’s righteousness; blood was to be shed for forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22), yet the blood of the animal sacrifices could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:1,

4); this was done publicly (cf. Acts 26:23, 26); allows us to be “justified by faith” (Romans 3:26)

- This was an act of mercy – delayed God’s wrath to give us time to repent (Romans 2:4-5); God was motivated by love to send Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins (1 John 4:10); this salvation is available to all (1 John 2:2; cf. John 3:16; Acts 10:34-35)

## **Conclusion**

- Jesus died on the cross as a propitiation for us – it was an act of mercy and a demonstration of love; it turned away God’s wrath in order to give us a chance to be saved; through the shedding of His blood we can be forgiven
- Let us never take His sacrifice for granted – instead, let us take advantage of it so that we can be saved