

Grace to You :: *esp Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Heaven's Perspective on the Cross: Satisfaction

Scripture: Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10

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In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. —1 John 4:10

“Propitiation” is an odd word, and not one you’re likely to hear often. But it is a vital concept in our ongoing study of Christ’s death from heaven’s perspective.

The word effectively means *satisfaction*, and it is used repeatedly in reference to Jesus’ death. In 1 John 2:2 we read, “He Himself is the propitiation for our sins.” Romans 3:25 says Christ was “displayed publicly as a propitiation.” And Hebrews 2:17 describes the Lord’s redemptive role this way: “Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

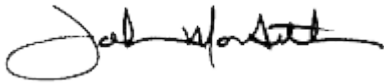
The teaching of the New Testament is clear: Christ’s death brought satisfaction for the sins of every person who would ever believe in Him. Following the pattern of Israel’s sacrificial system, Jesus was the offering—the only one capable of fully satisfying God. As we’ve seen already, Christ was the perfect sacrifice for our sinners like you and me. He served as our substitute, submitting to the horrors of the cross in our place.

But unlike with the Old Testament sacrifices, how do we know God was satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ? Hebrews 1:3 says, “When He [Jesus] had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” God raised His Son from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in glory. We know Christ’s death satisfied God’s wrath because His wrath came to an end, after which Jesus was fully restored in glory.

It’s important that we have a right understanding of God’s wrath and how it was satisfied. The story of the crucifixion isn’t a story of a loving Christ trying to placate an angry God—there cannot be that kind of disharmony in the Trinity. The Father and the Son have never worked in opposition, nor even independent of one another. No, the story of the crucifixion is that a loving God offered *Himself* as a sacrifice.

When we talk about salvation—and we’ll talk more about it next time—what is it that we’re saved from? The common assumption is that we have been saved from our sins, or saved from hell. That’s true; however, the ultimate reality is that believers have been saved *from God*. Christians no longer face the penalty of their sin because His wrath has been satisfied. It’s a loving, gracious, merciful, compassionate God who provided Himself as the substitute to bear the full fury of His own judgment so that sinners can be saved.

God sent His Son out of love to satisfy Himself. In His suffering, Christ paid in full the price to satisfy God. And that's how our sins, as Psalm 103 says, can be removed "as far as the east is from the west" and remembered no more. It's why Paul says in Romans 8:1 that "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Propitiation is the exhaustion and satisfaction of God's wrath through the sacrifice of Jesus. Christ died as God, and was sent from God to satisfy God.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John MacArthur". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

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