

## Jesus is Our Atoning Sacrifice

**1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**

### He Himself

Not only is Jesus our Advocate in Heaven who works on our behalf, He is also the sacrifice that cleanses us and satisfies God's just wrath, making possible a relationship with Him in the first place.

Because God is a holy God, His anger and justice burns against sin. People destroy other people's lives and their own lives by sin. God is right to be angry about that! He has sworn that sin will be punished.

**The soul who sins will die.** Ezekiel 18:4b, and Romans 6:23a **The wages of sin is death.**

But God knows that if He gave man justice, then all mankind would die and go to hell. On the other hand, if God didn't punish man for his sin, His justice wouldn't be satisfied. The solution: He Himself is the atoning sacrifice, the substitute for the death that we owed. He would take the sin of mankind upon Himself. Jesus is not just "the propitiator", the one who makes the atoning sacrifice, but also the "propitiation." Jesus Himself, as the sacrifice is what satisfies the justice of God.

### Is The Propitiation For Our Sins

So, what does it mean that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins? Propitiation means "averting the wrath of God by the offering of a gift." Or an offering to appease or satisfy an offended person. In the Bible, propitiation is not something that we provide to God to get right with him again; it is something that God provides to us that we may be justly and mercifully forgiven and accepted, and he does this at his own expense through the loving gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ's death is the means for his saving purposes to be the propitiation we need in order to be reconciled to God. In other words, what God requires, God himself provides in Christ.

### Mercy Seat

We see all of this foreshadowed in the Old Testament covenant ceremonies and in the sacrificial system. God explains: "**I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life**" (Lev 17:11). That is, God—knowing that his people would sin and break his law—in love and grace provided blood sacrifice in order to turn away his just judgment from falling on them, assure his continued fellowship with them, and cover their sin in his sight. The Hebrew term "kapporet" (Greek: "hilastērion") has been translated as "mercy seat;" and it describes the "means of propitiation" or "place of propitiation". The "place of propitiation" was the lid of the Ark of the Covenant, a slab of pure gold. This was a picture of the throne of God, and it's where God was present when He communicated with Moses. Jesus' sacrifice was symbolically seen to have elements of the Day of Atonement in the process of restoring a relationship with God. Just like the blood of the sacrificed unblemished goat was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat, Jesus provided the blood for the place of propitiation (Rom 3:25; Heb 9:12-14). Just like the Mercy Seat received the blood to appease God, Jesus was the place of propitiation (1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10). Just like the High Priest who alone enters the Holy of Holies and the presence of God with the blood of the goat he sacrificed, Jesus became the High Priest and mediator of the New Covenant (Heb 9:15, 24-26). Jesus is the High Priest who provides His own blood for the expiation of sins of human beings. In Jesus Christ the Mosaic Law was truly fulfilled.

**1 John 4:10—"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation (hilasmon) for our sins."** Here John, makes it clear that God in love provides his Son as the propitiation we need. God takes the initiative toward us in love—even though we have betrayed him and rebelled against him—and provides for us precisely the propitiation we need. God's love for us is supremely manifested in the cross Christ as Jesus provides propitiation. In response, we ought to love one another in in this kind of costly, self-giving way.

### And Not for Our Sins Only, Bur for the Sins of the Whole World

And not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." John wants us to understand that it's our personal sin that Jesus has made propitiation for. But he also wants us to know that all believers have

this in common. Believers have this shared experience of forgiveness together. And he also wants us to know that Jesus' propitiatory work is not limited just to believers. When Jesus gave His perfectly sinless life to satisfy the just wrath of our righteous and holy God, it was sufficient to provide forgiveness for the whole world John 3:16 <sup>16</sup> **For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish, but have eternal life.** There is enough effect in the Blood of Jesus that all of humanity could be saved, if they would only come to God through faith in Jesus. But, Jesus' dying for their sins does not remove them from the unrepentant heart—they must choose to do this themselves—God will not force them, because they have free will.

### **What Does Christ's Atonement Mean to My Daily Life?**

#### **Saved to Walk in the Spirit in Newness of Life**

So, how does God's atonement help me in my daily life? Our sins have been paid for, that we are justified in Christ, and that we stand before Him guiltless. We don't have to live our Christian life as though God's acceptance of us is based on performance. We don't have to live under the weight of the guilt of sin on a daily basis because my guilt has been taken away because of Jesus' atoning work on the cross! We live a life where we are continually pursuing obedience, and when we sin, repenting confessing to God. But it's not to get re-saved, or to keep God's wrath from me. It's obedience as a joyful response, an expression of love for what God has done by sending Jesus to die for us on the cross.

#### **Saved to Heal and Forgive**

Our relationships are changed too. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to rightly relate to one another. In the Lord's Prayer, we are told to petition God for the forgiveness of our sins and to forgive others who have sinned against us ([Matt. 6:12](#)). We can't possibly forgive everyone in the way that God wants us to without help from the Holy Spirit. And this is made possible by Christ's atoning work on the cross. There's this relationship between God's forgiveness of our sin *and* our forgiveness of others.

#### **Saved to Serve**

And lastly, we must remember that we are saved to Serve God. **9 who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was granted to us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 2 Timothy 1:9)** You were saved to serve God. God redeemed you so you could do his "holy work." You're not saved by service, but you are saved for service. In God's Kingdom, you have a place, a purpose, a role, and a function to fulfill. This gives your life great significance and value. It cost Jesus his own life to purchase your salvation. The Bible reminds us, **20 For you have been bought for a price: therefore glorify God in your body.** (1 Corinthians 6:20. We don't serve God out of guilt or fear or even duty but out of joy and deep gratitude for what he's done for us. Rom 12:1 **Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice, [a]acceptable to God, which is your [b]spiritual service of worship.**