

## Propitiation

- Definition
  - To appease wrath
  - “The act of turning aside the wrath of the offended God by means of appropriate sacrifice.”<sup>1</sup>
  - Propitiation refers to the act where God’s righteous wrath is appeased or turned aside by the death of His Son on the cross (Rom. 3:26, 1 John 4:10). As such, it is a supreme act of love on the part of the Father and Son.
- Biblical teaching
  - Rom 3:24–25 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; <sup>25</sup> whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. *This was* to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed
  - 1 John 4:10 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.
- Described
  - Propitiation answers the question, “Saved from what?” Or better yet, “Saved from whom?”
  - Because human sin is personally against God and incites God’s wrath, the wrath of God must be removed for the elect to exist in right standing before God.
  - By receiving the full exercise of the Father’s wrath against the sins of his people, Christ satisfied God’s righteous anger against sin.

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, (Crossway: Wheaton), 1997, p. 178.

- In doing so, he turned away his wrath from us who, had it not been for our substitute, were bound to suffer for it ourselves.<sup>2</sup>
  
- Defense
  - The idea that God is a God of wrath/anger may be offensive to some.
  - However, the unregenerate understands something of the fact that God is personally angry at sin.
  - This is clear, in part, as the unregenerate have a natural hostility towards God.
  - They flee God, b/c, they understand that God's judicial righteous wrath remains against them for their sin (John 3:36).
  - Thus, they flee from the word of God; from the people of God; and accountability to God.
  - The unregenerate will continue to do so, in various ways, until their conscience is cleansed by regeneration and repentance and faith in the propitiatory sacrifice, Jesus Christ.
  
- Timing
  - Propitiation occurred at the time of Christ's substitutionary atoning death on the cross.
  - It happened at the historical event of his crucifixion, where Christ offered himself as the wrath-bearing sacrifice to God the Father (Rom 3:25-26).
  
- Blessing
  - The propitiation accomplished by Christ as our substitute gives assurance, that, in historical and judicial fact, God is rendered propitious towards those who put faith in Christ.
  
- John Murray: "Because he loves himself supremely, he cannot suffer what

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<sup>2</sup> *Biblical Doctrine*, p. 528.

belongs to the integrity of his character and glory to be compromised or curtailed. That is the reason for propitiation.”<sup>3</sup>

- Recommended resource:
  - *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray, pp. 25-29 (Eerdmans, 2015).
  - *The Cross and Salvation*, Bruce Demarest, pp. 178-180 (Crossway, 1997).

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<sup>3</sup> *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, p. 28.