

## Romans 3:25

### Righteousness Revealed in Justification – 3:21-5:21

#### Propitiation

**The Finished Work of the Cross** - The doctrines of redemption, reconciliation and propitiation, combined into one interrelated body of truth, are often termed *The Finished Work of Christ*.

Redemption

Reconciliation – (2 Corinthians 5:18-21) - A change of relationship from hostility to peace between two parties.

Objective – The world is reconciled.

Subjective – Believers are reconciled when they believe in Jesus.

Propitiation - A satisfying sacrifice. The wrath of God is satisfied (propitiated) by the sacrifice of His Son.

**Redemption** → **SIN**

**Reconciliation** → **MAN**

**Propitiation** → **GOD**

#### Verse 25

*Whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation* – There are three words in the New Testament that are translated “propitiation”. All have the root idea of a satisfactory sacrifice but they differ slightly in meaning. Each of these words occurs two times in the New Testament.

*Hilaskomai* – Satisfaction or forgiveness based on the means by which the forgiveness is accomplished. The emphasis is the removal of guilt (Luke 18:13, Hebrews 2:17).

*Hilasmos* – An appeasing based on the means of forgiveness. The emphasis is on *the sacrifice* as the satisfaction of God’s wrath and justice (1 John 2:2, 1 John 4:10).

*Hilasterion* – The place of satisfaction or forgiveness. This Greek word translates the Old Testament word for “mercy seat” (Hebrews 9:5, Romans 3:25).

*The Mercy Seat* – The lid or cover for the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:17-22, Leviticus 16:14-15).

Items in the Ark:

*Manna* – (Exodus 16:33-34) Representing God’s provision which Israel rejected. Jesus is the true Manna, John 6:32, 48-50.

*Aaron’s rod* – Representing God’s authority which Israel rejected. Jesus always submitted to the Father’s authority, John 6:38.

*The Stone Tablets (Law)* - Representing God’s right standard of living which they rejected. Jesus fulfilled the Law perfectly, Matthew 5:17, Heb. 4:15.

What is the significance? The mercy seat is where God meets man! Exodus 25:21-22:

*“And you shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony which I shall give you. And there I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.”*

In propitiation Jesus is BOTH the *propitiatory sacrifice* and the *mercy seat* or place of meeting between God and man!

As the sacrifice (*hilasmos*), 1 John 2:2, He paid for the sin of the world!

He becomes our *mercy seat*, (*hilasterion*) the meeting place between God and man, when we put our faith in Him.

*A propitiation in His blood through faith* – The Greek word order is “a propitiation through faith in His blood”. This is best understood as “a mercy seat by means of His blood through faith”.

*To demonstrate His righteousness* – God does not compromise His righteous standards when He forgives sin. He is righteous to always act in accordance with His own character. It is because of the sacrifice of Jesus that God is just in declaring a person righteous by faith.

*He passed over the sins previously committed* – This refers to the period of time before the cross. God did not forgive the sins of Old Testament saints in finality until Jesus died on the cross. The blood of the animal sacrifices of Judaism only covered them temporarily. Their sins were paid on credit and when the bill came due, Jesus paid it in full.

**“Divine love triumphed over divine wrath by divine self-sacrifice... God took His own loving initiative to appease His own righteous anger by bearing it His own self in His Son when He took our place and died for us”<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1968, pp. 159, 175.