

FAITH AND JUSTIFICATION: THE WAY FOR THE WORLD TO BE RIGHT WITH GOD

(90)

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[Romans 3:21-5:21](#)

(Continuation from 05/06/18)

A. Righteousness: The Way to be Right With God, [Romans 3:21-26](#)

[Romans 3:21-26 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ “But now apart from the Law *the* righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,
²² even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
²⁴ being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;
²⁵ 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;*
²⁶ for the demonstration, *I say*, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

[\(Romans 3:21-26\)](#) Introduction— Righteousness: the “righteousness of God” is used in three ways in Scripture.

1. Righteousness means God’s character. It means the righteousness, justice, and perfection which God Himself possesses and shows.
2. Righteousness refers to man’s lack of godly character. It means the sinful, depraved, unrighteous, unjust, and imperfect nature and behavior of man.
3. Righteousness means the righteousness, that is, the perfection which God provides for man in Christ Jesus. When a man allows the Lord Jesus Christ to take his sins, he is given the righteousness of God. Christ robes the man in the righteousness of God Himself—by faith ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [Philippians 3:9](#)).

[2 Corinthians 5:21 \(NASB\)](#)

²¹ “He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

[Philippians 3:9 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹ “And may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith.”

1. Righteousness is now revealed (v.21-22).
2. Righteousness is for everyone (v.22-23).
3. Righteousness is only possible through justification (v.24).
4. Righteousness is by an act of God alone: by propitiation (v.25).
5. Righteousness has one purpose: to proclaim God's personal righteousness (v.25-26).

4. (Romans 3:25) Propitiation— Jesus Christ, Blood: righteousness is by an act of God alone, the act of propitiation.

Romans 3:25 (NASB)

²⁵“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.*”

(See below, Propitiation— 1 John 2:1-2; Deeper Study # 11—1 John 2:2 for more discussion.) Propitiation (*hilastērion*) means “to be a sacrifice, a covering, a satisfaction, a payment, an appeasement for sin.”

Note two very significant points.

1. God is the One who “**set forth**” (**proetheto**) Christ to be the propitiation for man’s sins.

a. God purposed to “**set forth**” Christ: God determined, resolved, ordained Christ to be the propitiation or the sacrifice for man’s sins.

b. God set Christ “**before**” (**pro**) the world as the propitiation for the world’s sins.

The “**pro**” in the Greek word “**proetheto**” (**set forth**) indicates this fact.

⇒ God set Christ before Himself, purposed that He be the propitiation or the sacrifice for man’s sin.

⇒ God set Christ publicly before the world, showing that He is definitely the propitiation for the world’s sins.

2. It is Christ Himself who is the propitiation for man’s sins. **But note:** it is not His teachings, power, example, or life that makes Christ the propitiation. It is His blood—His sacrifice, His death, His sufferings, His cross—that causes God to accept Jesus as the propitiation.

It is the blood of Christ that God accepts as...

- 1) the sacrifice for our sins.
- 2) the covering for our sins.
- 3) the satisfaction for our sins.
- 4) the payment for the penalty of our sins.
- 5) the appeasement of His wrath against sin.

What does the Bible mean by “**the blood of Christ**”? It means the willingness of Christ to die (**shed His blood**) for man. It means the supreme sacrifice Christ paid for man’s sins. It means the terrible sufferings Christ underwent for man’s sins. It means the voluntary laying down of His life for man’s sins ([John 10:17-18](#)).

John 10:17-18 (NASB)

¹⁷“**For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again.**

¹⁸“**No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I**

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have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father.”

Hebrews 2:17 (NASB)

¹⁷ “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.”

1 John 2:1-2 (NASB)

¹ “My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

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

1 John 4:10 (NASB)

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.”

Luke 18:13 (NASB)

¹³ “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful [propitious] to me, the sinner!’”

DEEPER STUDY # 11

1 John 2:2 (NASB)

² “And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.”

(1 John 2:2) Propitiation (*hilasmos*): “to sacrifice in order to appease; to satisfy; to cover; to pay the penalty for.” It is a sacrificial word. In the Old Testament when a man sinned, or something went wrong, he brought a sacrifice to God. The idea was that the sacrifice would appease and pacify and satisfy God. He thought God would be gracious to him and place the punishment for his sin upon the animal. When things go wrong, man has always offered to fast and pray and serve with renewed vigor, or else he has offered to give up some meaningful pleasure or possession. There is a feeling that this kind of denial or renewed sacrifice appeases and satisfies God.

It is true that God told Israel to offer sacrifices. **But He did it for a reason:** to teach Israel, and through them the world, that the answer does not lie in human or animal sacrifice. A human sacrifice cannot bring about a right relationship with God. Man’s problem is too deep for human sacrifice; his contamination too severe; his disease too terrible; his infection too deadly. The paraphernalia of earthly sacrifice can never put things right with God.

The reason is simply stated. Man’s sin has cut him off from God, severed his relationship with God, put God out of *arm’s reach*. Man, instinctively senses this. Thus, when man fails to get satisfaction from his sacrifice, he often returns to his former behavior and practices.

What man needs is to be disinfected, to have his sins covered. He needs to know beyond a doubt that God does accept him and is satisfied with him. And then he needs a power to live for God.

This comes about through propitiation. **Four things** need to be said about propitiation.

1. God is the One who has to be appeased, satisfied, and propitiated. The Bible is not speaking of reconciliation. The Bible never says that God has to be reconciled to man. God is already the friend of man; He loves man. It is man who needs to be reconciled to God. Man is the one who holds enmity, who ignores, neglects, and rejects God. Thus, God is the One who has to be appeased or propitiated (cp. [Luke 18:13](#)).

[Luke 18:13 \(NASB\)](#)

¹³“**But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'**”

There is another thought here as well. God is righteous and holy, and His righteousness and holiness have to be satisfied. He can only accept a person who is perfectly righteous and holy. It might be said that anything less than perfection would contaminate the very atmosphere around God. And the presence and dwelling place of God would no longer be the utopia which God has prepared for the believer and for which man dreams.

2. Jesus Christ is the propitiation, the satisfaction for sins. Christ was completely righteous and holy; therefore, He was the perfect and ideal Man. This means that His death was the perfect and ideal sacrifice. God was able to satisfy His justice against sins by casting it against Christ. The perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ completely satisfied and appeased the righteousness of God ([1 John 4:9-10](#)).

[1 John 4:9-10 \(NASB\)](#)

⁹“**By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.**

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.”**

3. Propitiation means coverage. Christ covers our sins so that God no longer can see them ([Romans 3:25](#); [Hebrews 2:17](#); [1 John 2:2](#)).

[Romans 3:25 \(NASB\)](#)

²⁵“**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.”**

[Hebrews 2:17 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁷“**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.”

1 John 2:2 (NASB)

²“And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for *those of* the whole world.”

4. Propitiation finds its type in the mercy seat, that is, in the lid of the ark (Hebrews 9:5).

Hebrews 9:5 (NASB)

⁵“And above it *were* the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat; but of these things we cannot now speak in detail.”

God had said that man was to approach Him through the sacrifice of an animal, through the shedding of blood. The lid or covering of the ark was sprinkled once a year with the blood of a perfect animal. This signified that the life of the people was being offered to God in the blood of the victim. God was thereby appeased and satisfied. (Cp. [Luke 18:13](#); [Romans 3:25](#); [Hebrews 2:17](#); [1 John 2:2](#); [1 John 4:10](#).)

Luke 18:13 (NASB)

¹³“But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’”

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