

LOVE FLOWS DOWN AND LOVE FLOWS OUT

I. 1 John 4:7-12 & John 13:34-35

A. Today is a Communion Sunday and I'd like for us to use the Apostles' Creed as our affirmation of our faith as we prepare for the Lord's Table. We make this declaration with our Brothers & Sisters around the Globe, from every nation, tribe, and tongue, all members of the Family of God, Christ's beloved Church...

B. The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,

Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell;

The third day He rose from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence

He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

C. 1 John 4:7-12 (ESV) is our text this morning, written by the Apostle John, and worth underlining or highlighting in all your Bibles. Hear these words not as sweet poetry or as some mere tepid suggestion, but as the inspired Word of God:

1) V7-8: 7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. (Loving one another does not CAUSE us to be born of God or to know Him; rather, loving one another is EVIDENCE of our new birth in Christ. The vertical effect of God's love flowing down is demonstrated by its horizontal flowing out.)

2) V9-10: 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. (cf John 3:16) 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (Propitiation; [prō-pi-shē-ā-shun] (Gk. *hilasmos*) is a potent word which means a sacrifice of atonement for our sins. It's the total extinguishing of God's fiery wrath against our sinful selves, achieved by our Holy God through the sacrifice of His Son who absorbed the wrath we deserved. Our perfectly just God did this to bring about the full restoration of unhindered and everlasting fellowship with Himself, broken since our original parents rebelled in the Garden. That's the magnitude of God's love for you! (The Bread & Cup remind us!)

3) And what might the outcome be in our hearts and the overflow of our lives? V11-12: 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.

D. The late Jerry Bridges in his book, *The Practice of Godliness*, writes: "Jesus did not die just to give us peace and a purpose in life; He died to save us from the wrath of God. He died to reconcile us to a holy God who was alienated from us because of our sin. He died to ransom us from the penalty of sin--the punishment of everlasting destruction, shut out from the

presence of the Lord. He died that we, the just objects of God's wrath, should become, by His grace, heirs of God and co-heirs with Him."

E. Jerry Bridges in another book, *The Gospel for Real Life*, echoes: "I believe a word that forcefully captures the essence of Jesus' work of propitiation is the word exhausted. Jesus exhausted the wrath of God. It was not merely deflected and prevented from reaching us; it was exhausted. Jesus bore the full, unmitigated brunt of it. God's wrath against sin was unleashed in all its fury on His beloved Son. He held nothing back."

F. Josh McDowell uses this apt illustration: "God loved us so much, you might say, He stood up, took off His royal robes, and set them across the back of His judge chair, and He came down in the form of His Son Christ Jesus, and instead of standing before us as our judge, He stood next to us as our Savior. And He took the penalty upon Himself. He took the holy, just, righteous wrath of God upon Himself. And when Jesus said *"It is finished"* all the requirements of the law and the nature of God were satisfied. He was set free to deal with us in love." **(The Bread & Cup remind us.)**

G. This takes us back to our text, back to John reiterating the original command of Jesus that we must love one another. Again, the manifestation of our love horizontally is evidence that it has come down to us vertically from the very heart of God! You see there's a reason we take Communion together. It was never designed to be a private exercise. It's not a "me-and-Jesus" practice. It's a "we-are-all-in-this-together" ordinance, a sacrament to be shared corporately. It's why Paul exhorted the Corinthians to examine themselves before partaking because he'd heard the terrible reports of them butchering the practice by drunkenness and disdain towards the poor among them. So we approach the Table of our Lord, together, acknowledging both aspects of the Great Commandment.

H. Right now, either in this Sanctuary or in your cars parked next to one another, we are together. We're one family of believers geographically. May it also be said of us, "We're one family in Christ twenty-four-seven no matter where we're at or what we're doing!" Because, you see, Jesus Christ, has not only absorbed God's wrath against my sin, He's done the same for your sin and your sin and your sin. He's not only adopted me as His child, He's adopted you and you and you as well. He's not only granted me eternal life, He's granted it to you and you and you as well. We are all His! We're all in this together! His love for us is unimaginable! Let us, therefore, love one another! (Let the Bread & Cup remind us...)

*** Pray & Officiate Communion...**

*** John 13:34-35 (ESV) We go home today with the red letter words from Jesus spoken at the Last Supper, right after He washed His disciples' feet: *34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. 35 By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*"**

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[1 John 4:7-12 \(ESV\)](#)

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. **8** Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. **9** In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. **10** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. **11** Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. **12** No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.

Quote by Jerry Bridges

"Jesus did not die just to give us peace and a purpose in life; He died to save us from the wrath of God. He died to reconcile us to a holy God who was alienated from us because of our sin. He died to ransom us from the penalty of sin – the punishment of everlasting destruction, shut out from the presence of the Lord. He died that we, the just objects of God's wrath, should become, by His grace, heirs of God and co-heirs with Him."

- Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, NavPress, 1996, p. 24.

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"I believe a word that forcefully captures the essence of Jesus' work of propitiation is the word exhausted. Jesus exhausted the wrath of God. It was not merely deflected and prevented from reaching us; it was exhausted. Jesus bore the full, unmitigated brunt of it. God's wrath against sin was unleashed in all its fury on His beloved Son. He held nothing back."

- Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life* by Jerry Bridges, NavPress, p. 57.

Quote by Josh McDowell

"God loved us so much, you might say, He stood up, took off His royal robes, and set them across the back of His judge chair, and He came down in the form of His Son Christ Jesus, and instead of standing before us as our judge, He stood next to us as our Savior. And He took the penalty upon Himself. He took the holy, just, righteous wrath of God upon Himself. And when Jesus said "It is finished" all the requirements of the law and the nature of God were satisfied. He was set free to deal with us in love."

John 13:34-35 (ESV)

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. **35** By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Bonus Rations for Further Nourishment

Propitiation - Paul Washer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zchilnEECs>

Propitiation Defined (Galatians 2:20) - Matt Chandler

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UuhuRrwnO_A

Propitiation: An Illustration by Josh McDowell
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9v1h1PeFtg>

What is the Apostles' Creed? - GotQuestions.org
<https://www.gotquestions.org/apostles-creed.html>

Whatever is False, Whatever is Immoral, Whatever is Prejudiced - Tim Challies
<https://www.challies.com/articles/whatever-is-false-whatever-is-immoral-whatever-is-prejudiced/>

How Does God Measure Success? - Seana Scott
<https://seanascott.org/how-does-god-measure-success/>

1 John 2:1-6 (AMP)

1 My little children (believers, dear ones), I am writing you these things so that you will not sin and violate God's law. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate [who will intercede for us] with the Father: Jesus Christ the righteous [the upright, the just One, who conforms to the Father's will in every way--purpose, thought, and action]. **2** And He [that same Jesus] is the propitiation for our sins [the atoning sacrifice that holds back the wrath of God that would otherwise be directed at us because of our sinful nature--our worldliness, our lifestyle]; and not for ours alone, but also for [the sins of all believers throughout] the whole world. **3** And this is how we know [daily, by experience] that we have come to know Him [to understand Him and be more deeply acquainted with Him]: if we habitually keep [focused on His precepts and obey] His commandments (teachings). **4** Whoever says, "I have come to know Him," but does not habitually keep [focused on His precepts and obey] His commandments (teachings), is a liar, and the truth [of the divine word] is not in him. **5** But whoever habitually keeps His word and obeys His precepts [and treasures His message in its entirety], in him the love of God has truly been perfected [it is completed and has reached maturity]. By this we know [for certain] that we are in Him: **6** whoever says he lives in Christ [that is, whoever says he has accepted Him as God and Savior] ought [as a moral obligation] to walk and conduct himself just as He walked and conducted Himself.

Romans 3:21-26 (ESV)

21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— **22** the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins. **26** It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

1 Peter 1:18-21 (NIV)

18 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. **20** He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. **21** Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

Ephesians 1:3-10 (ESV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love **5** He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, **6** to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. **7** In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, **8** which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight **9** making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ **10** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

John 15:9-17 (ESV)

8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples. **9** As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Abide in My love. **10** If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. **11** These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. **12** This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. **14** You are My friends if you do what I command you. **15** No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in My name, He may give it to you. **17** These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

1 Peter 4:8 (NIV)

8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

Quote by Jonathan Edwards

"The redeemed are dependent of God for all. All that we have--wisdom, the pardon of sin, deliverance, acceptance in God's favor, grace, holiness, true comfort and happiness, eternal life and glory--we have from God by a Mediator; and this Mediator is God. God not only gives us the Mediator, and accepts His mediation, and of His power and grace bestows the things purchased by the Mediator, but He is the Mediator. Our blessings are what we have by purchase; and the purchase is made of God; the blessings are purchased of Him; and not only so, but God is the purchaser. Yes, God is

both the purchaser and the price; for Christ, who is God, purchased these blessings by offering Himself as the price of our salvation."

- Jonathan Edwards, *Closer Walk*, July, 1988, p. 15.

Quote by John Stott

"It is God Himself who in holy wrath needs to be propitiated, God Himself who in holy love undertook to do the propitiating, and God Himself who in the person of His Son died for the propitiation of our sins. Thus God took His own loving initiative to appease His own righteous anger by bearing it His own self in His own Son when He took our place and died for us. There is no crudity here to evoke our ridicule, only the profundity of holy love to evoke our worship."

- John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, p. 175.

Quote by Oswald Chambers

"We trample the blood of the Son of God if we think we are forgiven because we are sorry for our sins. The only explanation for the forgiveness of God and for the unfathomable depth of His forgetting is the death of Jesus Christ. Our repentance is merely the outcome of our personal realization of the atonement which He has worked out for us. It does not matter who or what we are; there is absolute reinstatement into God by the death of Jesus Christ and by no other way, not because Jesus Christ pleads, but because He died. It is not earned, but accepted. All the pleading which deliberately refuses to recognize the Cross is of no avail; it is battering at a door other than the one that Jesus has opened. Our Lord does not pretend we are all right when we are all wrong. The atonement is a propitiation whereby God, through the death of Jesus, makes an unholy man holy."

Quote by John Piper

"So to save sinners, and at the same time magnify the worth of His glory, God lays our sin on Jesus and abandons Him to shame and slaughter on the cross. The clearest and most important biblical statement of this truth is found in Romans 3:23-26. If I were asked, "What is the most important paragraph in the Bible?" I think this is the paragraph I would name. It goes to the very root of the Christian gospel and lays bare the heart of God like few other texts. If there is a moment in the symphony of biblical revelation when the contrasting themes of justice and mercy come together into a magnificent orchestral statement of unity and harmony and peace, it is here in Romans 3:23-26: *23) All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; 24) they are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, 25) whom God put forward as a propitiation by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins; 26) it was to prove at the present time that He Himself is righteous and that He justifies him who has faith in Jesus.*"

- John Piper, *The Pleasures of God*, p. 162.

Quote by Jerry Bridges

"Propitiation addresses the wrath of God. It is the work of Christ saving us from God's wrath by absorbing it in His own person as our substitute. Expiation, which basically means "removal," accompanies propitiation and speaks of the work of Christ in

removing or putting away our sin. Such is the symbolism of the two goats used on the Day of Atonement. The first goat represented Christ's work of propitiation as it was killed and its blood sprinkled on the mercy seat. The second goat represented Christ's work of expiation in removing or blotting out the sins that were against us. The object of propitiation is the wrath of God. The object of expiation is the sin, which must be removed from His presence.

- Jerry Bridges, *The Gospel for Real Life*, NavPress, p. 71-72.

Quote by Jonathan Parnell

"What Is Propitiation? First, let me say what it isn't. Christian propitiation is not the works of sinful man to crudely appease an angry deity. That's the pagan idea. Rather, Christian propitiation is the work of God to absorb His divine anger toward sinful man. The first is capricious and whimsical. The latter is the calculated selfless act of a loving God — indeed, of a God who is love."

- Article by Jonathan Parnell, "*The God-Centered Cross of Love Inexhaustible*."

Justification Only Through Atonement

An unknown sage wrote: "For several generations the Edinburgh Review carried on its cover the Latin epigram, "*The Judge is condemned when the guilty is acquitted*." The guilty is sometimes acquitted in human courts, but this never happens in the Divine Court. There, if man is justified, or, to put it in plain present-day English, acquitted or found not guilty, it is in strict harmony with the law of right, of justice. How, then, shall mortal man be just with God? Man is a sinner. The penalty upon sin as announced by God is death, eternal death, spiritual death; and God will by no means clear the guilty. The only way whereby God can remain Just, and still become the Justifier of the guilty, is through the atoning death of Jesus Christ."

Quote by A. H. Strong

"God requires satisfaction because He is holiness, but He makes satisfaction because He is love."

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"In friendship...we think we have chosen our peers. In reality a few years' difference in the dates of our births, a few more miles between certain houses, the choice of one university instead of another...the accident of a topic being raised or not raised at a first meeting--any of these chances might have kept us apart. But, for a Christian, there are, strictly speaking no chances. A secret master of ceremonies has been at work. Christ, who said to the disciples, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you," can truly say to every group of Christian friends, "Ye have not chosen one another but I have chosen you for one another." The friendship is not a reward for our discriminating and good taste in finding one another out. It is the instrument by which God reveals to each of us the beauties of others."

- C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, p. 89.

Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia as Judge

A story is told about Fiorello LaGuardia, who, when he was mayor of New York City during the worst days of the Great Depression and all of WWII, was called by adoring New Yorkers 'the Little Flower' because he was only five foot four and always wore a carnation in his lapel. He was a colorful character who used to ride the New York City fire trucks, raid speakeasies with the police department, take entire orphanages to baseball games, and whenever the New York newspapers were on strike, he would go on the radio and read the Sunday funnies to the kids.

One bitterly cold night in January of 1935, the mayor turned up at a night court that served the poorest ward of the city. LaGuardia dismissed the judge for the evening and took over the bench himself. Within a few minutes, a tattered old woman was brought before him, charged with stealing a loaf of bread. She told LaGuardia that her daughter's husband had deserted her, her daughter was sick, and her two grandchildren were starving. But the shopkeeper, from whom the bread was stolen, refused to drop the charges.

"It's a real bad neighborhood, your Honor." the man told the mayor. "She's got to be punished to teach other people around here a lesson." LaGuardia sighed. He turned to the woman and said "I've got to punish you. The law makes no exceptions—ten dollars or ten days in jail." But even as he pronounced sentence, the mayor was already reaching into his pocket. He extracted a bill and tossed it into his famous sombrero saying: "Here is the ten dollar fine which I now remit; and furthermore I am going to fine everyone in this courtroom fifty cents for living in a town where a person has to steal bread so that her grandchildren can eat. Mr. Baliff, collect the fines and give them to the defendant."

So the following day the New York City newspapers reported that \$47.50 was turned over to a bewildered old lady who had stolen a loaf of bread to feed her starving grandchildren, fifty cents of that amount being contributed by the red-faced grocery store owner, while some seventy petty criminals, people with traffic violations, and New York City policemen, each of whom had just paid fifty cents for the privilege of doing so, gave the mayor a standing ovation.

- Brennan Manning, *The Ragmuffin Gospel*, Multnomah, 1990, pp. 91-92.

Theological Note on 1 John 4:7-12

The Reformation Study Bible

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us. - 1 John 4:7-12 (ESV)

4:7-12: The love of God the Father for "His only Son (v.9) is the source of the love that binds the fellowship of believers together as a family. By giving us His Son, the Father introduced us to the perfect love and eternal life that the Father and the Son have always enjoyed.

- Theological note on 1 John 4:7-12, *The Reformation Study Bible*, R.C. Sproul General Editor, Reformation Trust, p. 2273.

Propitiation - ESV Study Bible

Propitiation (Gk. *hilasmos*) means "a sacrifice that bears God's wrath and turns it to favor," and that is also the meaning of the English word "propitiation."

- ESV Study Bible, explanatory notes on 1 John 2:2, p. 2431.

Expiation and Propitiation

From [R.C. Sproul](#) March 29, 2013

<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/two-important-words-good-friday-expiation-and-propitiation/>

When we talk about the vicarious aspect of the atonement, two rather technical words come up again and again: expiation and propitiation. These words spark all kinds of arguments about which one should be used to translate a particular Greek word, and some versions of the Bible will use one of these words and some will use the other one. I'm often asked to explain the difference between propitiation and expiation. The difficulty is that even though these words are in the Bible, we don't use them as part of our day-to-day vocabulary, so we aren't sure exactly what they are communicating in Scripture. We lack reference points in relation to these words.

Expiation and Propitiation

Let's think about what these words mean, then, beginning with the word expiation. The prefix *ex* means "out of" or "from," so expiation has to do with removing something or taking something away. In biblical terms, it has to do with taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty or the offering of an atonement. By contrast, propitiation has to do with the object of the expiation. The prefix *pro* means "for," so propitiation brings about a change in God's attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us. Through the process of propitiation, we are restored into fellowship and favor with Him.

In a certain sense, propitiation has to do with God's being appeased. We know how the word appeasement functions in military and political conflicts. We think of the so-called politics of appeasement, the philosophy that if you have a rambunctious world conqueror on the loose and rattling the sword, rather than risk the wrath of his blitzkrieg you give him the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia or some such chunk of territory. You try to assuage his wrath by giving him something that will satisfy him so that he won't come into your country and mow you down. That's an ungodly manifestation of appeasement. But if you are angry or you are violated, and I satisfy your anger, or appease you, then I am restored to your favor and the problem is removed.

The same Greek word is translated by both the words expiation and propitiation from time to time. But there is a slight difference in the terms. Expiation is the act that results in the change of God's disposition toward us. It is what Christ did on the cross, and the result of Christ's work of expiation is propitiation—God's anger is turned away. The distinction is the same as that between the ransom that is paid and the attitude of the one who receives the ransom.

Christ's Work Was an Act of Placation

Together, expiation and propitiation constitute an act of placation. Christ did His work on the cross to placate the wrath of God. This idea of placating the wrath of God has done little to placate the wrath of modern theologians. In fact, they become very wrathful about the whole idea of placating God's wrath. They think it is beneath the dignity of God to have to be placated, that we should have to do something to soothe Him or appease Him. We need to be very careful in how we understand the wrath of God, but let me remind you that the concept of placating the wrath of God has to do here not with a peripheral, tangential point of theology, but with the essence of salvation.

What is Salvation?

Let me ask a very basic question: what does the term salvation mean? Trying to explain it quickly can give you a headache, because the word salvation is used in about seventy different ways in the Bible. If somebody is rescued from certain defeat in battle, he experiences salvation. If somebody survives a life-threatening illness, that person experiences salvation. If somebody's plants are brought back from withering to robust health, they are saved. That's biblical language, and it's really no different than our own language. We save money. A boxer is saved by the bell, meaning he's saved from losing the fight by knockout, not that he is transported into the eternal kingdom of God. In short, any experience of deliverance from a clear and present danger can be spoken of as a form of salvation.

Ultimately, Jesus died to save us from the wrath of God.

When we talk about salvation biblically, we have to be careful to state that from which we ultimately are saved. The apostle Paul does just that for us in [1 Thessalonians 1:10](#), where he says Jesus "delivers us from the wrath to come." Ultimately, Jesus died to save us from the wrath of God. We simply cannot understand the teaching and the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth apart from this, for He constantly warned people that the whole world someday would come under divine judgment. Here are a few of His warnings concerning the judgment: "I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment" ([Matt. 5:22](#)); "I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment" ([Matt. 12:36](#)); and "The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here" ([Matt. 12:41](#)). Jesus' theology was a crisis theology. The Greek word crisis means "judgment." And the crisis of which Jesus preached was the crisis of an impending judgment of the world, at which point God is going to pour out His wrath against the unredeemed, the ungodly, and the impenitent.

The only hope of escape from that outpouring of wrath is to be covered by the atonement of Christ.

It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of a holy God Who's wrathful.

Therefore, Christ's supreme achievement on the cross is that He placated the wrath of God, which would burn against us were we not covered by the sacrifice of Christ. So if somebody argues against placation or the idea of Christ satisfying the wrath of God, be alert, because the gospel is at stake. This is about the essence of salvation—that as people who are covered by the atonement, we are redeemed from the supreme danger to which any person is exposed. It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of a holy God Who's wrathful. But there is no wrath for those whose sins have been paid. That is what salvation is all about.

- This was an excerpt from R.C. Sproul's [The Truth of the Cross](#).

Question: "What is Propitiation?"

By S. Michael Houdmann

<http://www.gotquestions.org/propitiation.html>

Answer: The word propitiation carries the basic idea of appeasement, or satisfaction, specifically towards God. Propitiation is a two-part act that involves appeasing the wrath of an offended person and being reconciled to him.

The necessity of appeasing God is something many religions have in common. In ancient pagan religions, as well as in many religions today, the idea is taught that man appeases God by offering various gifts or sacrifices. However, the Bible teaches that God Himself has provided the only means through which His wrath can be appeased and sinful man can be reconciled to Him. In the New Testament, the act of propitiation always refers to the work of God and not the sacrifices or gifts offered by man. The reason for this is that man is totally incapable of satisfying God's justice except by spending eternity in hell. There is no service, sacrifice or gift that man can offer that will appease the holy wrath of God or satisfy His perfect justice. The only satisfaction, or propitiation, that could be acceptable to God and that could reconcile man to Him, had to be made by God. For this reason God the Son, Jesus Christ, came into the world in human flesh to be the perfect sacrifice for sin and make atonement or "propitiation for the sins of the people" ([Hebrews 2:17](#)).

The word propitiation is used in several key verses to explain what Jesus accomplished through His death on the cross. For example, in [Romans 3:24-25](#) we see that believers in Christ have been "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed." These verses are a key point in Paul's argument in the Book of Romans and are really at the heart of the Gospel message.

In the first three chapters of Romans, Paul has made the argument that everybody, both Jew and Gentile alike, is under the condemnation of God and deserving of His wrath ([Romans 1:18](#)). Everyone has sinned and fallen short of the glory of God ([Romans 3:23](#)). All of us deserve His wrath and punishment. God in His infinite grace and mercy has provided a way that His wrath can be appeased and we can be reconciled to Him. That way is through the sacrificial death of His Son, Jesus Christ, as the atonement or payment for sins. It is through faith in Jesus Christ as God's perfect sacrifice, foretold in the Old Testament and fulfilled in the New Testament, that we can be reconciled to God. It is only because of Christ's perfect life, His death on the cross, and His resurrection on the third day that a lost sinner deserving of hell can be reconciled to a Holy God. The wonderful truth of the Gospel message is that Christians are saved from God's wrath and reconciled to God not because "we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" ([1 John 4:10](#)).

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" ([John 14:6](#)). The only way for God's wrath against sinful man to be appeased and for us to be reconciled to God is through Jesus Christ. There is no other way. This truth is also communicated in [1 John 2:2](#); "And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." An important part of Christ's saving work includes deliverance from God's wrath that the unbelieving sinner is under, because Jesus' atonement on the cross is the only thing that can turn away God's divine wrath. Those that reject Christ as their Savior and refuse to believe in Him have no hope of salvation. They can only look forward to facing the wrath of God that they have stored up for the coming day of judgment ([Romans 2:5](#)). There is no other propitiation or sacrifice that can be made for their sins.

- Recommended Resources: [Making Sense of Salvation by Wayne Grudem](#) and [Logos Bible Software](#).