

Propitiation (Leviticus 16:1-17 & Romans 3:21-31)

05-Jan-20

Let me pray before we begin...

### Intro/Propitiation Defined

So, throughout the month of January - we're doing a series on "SHUN" words in the Bible - that's words in the Bible that end in "TION" - SHUN

[PowerPoint 1-SHUN]

In **January 2019** - we looked at:

Revelation, Substitution, Salvation, Redemption

Now in **January 2020** we'll be looking at a few more **SHUN** words:

Propitiation, Justification, Adoption and Sanctification

Our "SHUN" word this week - is propitiation

So, we'd better **define** what **Propitiation** is:

[PowerPoint 2-Defintion]

Propitiation is:

*A gift or payment offered to turn away the anger of an offended person (God)*

*Offering that gift or payment pleases and satisfies the offended person (God)*

**Why** would **God** get **angry** about **sin**?

Well - because **God** is the **only one** who is truly **holy**

God is truly **unique** - as the **Creator** and **Sustainer** of all things - He is the only one **worthy** of **complete devotion** - because He is the only one who is truly **perfect, just, good** and **righteous**

As Isaiah 6:3 says:

Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory

And because **God** is **holy** - He gets **angry about sin**

As Habakkuk 1:13 says:

Your eyes [God] are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing

So, if **God** is truly **holy** and **perfect** - and without sin

And **human** beings are not perfect - and **continue** to **sin**

**God's anger** needs to be **turned away** somehow - that's **propitiation**

Let me use an illustration which might help us

**Johnny** in his early **twenties** began dating **Sally**, a **girl** he met at the **office**

**Johnny** had a **reputation** for being a "bit on the **wild** side" and there were times when **Sally** was **uncomfortable** with **his behaviour**

One night, Johnny took Sally to a **party** – things got out of hand – Johnny began **drinking** and by the time they drove home in the early hours of the morning – Johnny was **scarcely able to drive**

Then, the **unthinkable happened** – the **car hit a bank** – careered **out of control** – and **rolled** several times. When the vehicle came to a stop Johnny and Sally were **both unconscious**

Several hours later, **Johnny regained consciousness** – his head was thumping and his body ached all over

He asked the doctor "**How is Sally?**"

"It's **bad news**" the doctor replied "She's **paralysed** – and she won't ever walk again"

Johnny said "Can I see her?"

**"She won't talk to you" – the doctor said.**

Sometime later, **Johnny** received a **letter** from **Sally's lawyer**. In the light of her **permanent disability**, Sally was taking **legal action**.

**Johnny** wondered how he could have been such a **fool**. It was just one night, but it changed everything. Johnny **didn't know how to live with himself**, and he had **no idea what to do about Sally**.

There are **three things to consider** in this situation:

**First**, there is an **offense**. Johnny acted recklessly and irresponsibly when he decided to drive home after drinking.

**Second**, there is an **offended person**. Sally is angry, and rightly so.

**Third**, there is an **offender**. Johnny knows he is to **blame**. He is deeply **sorry** for what he has done, but that won't change the fact that Sally is paralysed and that her lawyers are preparing legal action against him.

So, what happened? **Johnny** hired a **lawyer** and **his lawyer talked to Sally's lawyer** about what it would take to settle the case. Their **discussion centered on one issue**: What will it take to **satisfy Sally**? What **Johnny thinks** really **doesn't matter**. It's **all about Sally**, because she is the **offended party**.

Suppose that the lawyers identify a sum of money that would be acceptable to Sally. The payment of that money would be a "propitiation." A propitiation is a payment offered to placate the anger of an offended person, to satisfy the need for justice and settle the case. In the same way, because our sin is an offense against God, it follows that **God is the one** who **determines what the propitiation should be**.

The question is, "What will satisfy God?" We may have our own ideas as to what should resolve the case, but none of that is relevant. God is the offended party. So, we must answer, "What will satisfy God?"

### **Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:1-17)**

So, in our OT reading from Leviticus 16:1-17 - God details what this propitiation will be - He reveals what will satisfy His anger (wrath) about people's sin. [Please turn there now]

[PowerPoint 3-Holy Place]

And the context is that God requires the High Priest, Aaron - **not** to go into the Holy Place whenever he chooses (V2) but he is to go into the Holy Place - **one day a year** (v34) - and make a sacrifice for the sins of the people.

This day is called Yom Kippur - the Day of Atonement

The Hebrew word for Atonement literally means **covering over with pitch – like black bitumen or tar – so it's like the sin of the people cannot be seen anymore.**

A dictionary **definition** of atonement means **making amends for a wrong** to bring **reconciliation - At -One - Ment - Humans at-one with God**

On that special day - Aaron has to make an **animal sacrifice for sin - on behalf of the people** - and also for **himself** and his household

Aaron has to sacrifice **5 animals** in all.

The **animals** were to be **sacrificed - rather than the people being punished**

**1 Ram** for as his **own burnt offering** [sweet smelling aroma for God] -v3

**1 Ram** for the **people's burnt offering - v5**

**1 Young bull** for his **own sin offering - v6, v11**

Then **2 goats** for the **people's sin offering - v5, v7, v8**

[PowerPoint 4-Scapegoat]

**1 goat** was killed and **sacrificed** to the **Lord - v9**

The other goat was used as a **scapegoat -v10 - with all the sin of the people** ceremonially **passed onto the scapegoat - by Aaron placing his hands** on the goat - and then the goat was led out of the camp - and this was **symbolical of taking the sin as far away as possible** from the people

The scapegoat is like a **garbage truck** taking the sin of the people outside the camp of Israel

As the prophet Isaiah 1:18 says:

Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

Notice when Aaron makes the sacrifice - in verses 14 and 15 - **blood** of the animal is **sprinkled** on the **atonement cover** - this is the cover of the ark of the covenant - this cover is also called the **mercy seat**.

The **presence of God** is **over** the ark of the covenant - and so the idea is the blood is sprinkled there as a **payment to God** - to **turn his anger away** - and so that **people** can have their **sins forgiven** - and be **reconciled** to God - and **at one with God** again (AT-ONE-MENT).

The **cover** always **represents God's mercy** - in accepting the animal's blood as payment for sin - rather than the people's own blood.

### Why blood?

#### [PowerPoint 5a-Blood]

Well - as Leviticus 17:11 says:

For the **life of a creature is in the blood**, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the **blood that makes atonement for one's life**

#### [PowerPoint 5b-Blood]

And as Hebrews 9:22 says:

In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and **without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness**

## A Better Way? (Romans 3:21-31)

### [PowerPoint 6a-A Better Way]

There are a **few problems** with the way this animal sacrifice works in the Old Testament

- 1<sup>st</sup> - it's very **messy** isn't it - I wouldn't want to be doing these blood sacrifices and burnt offerings on the altar here... Very messy. Perhaps there's a **better way**?
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - The high priest - **Aaron** - had to make a **sacrifice** for his own sin - so he was sinful just like everyone else in Israel. Perhaps there's a **better High Priest** than that?
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - The **sacrifices** had to be **repeated over and over** - **yearly** by the high priest in the Holy Place - and **daily** as people brought sacrifices for their sin
- 4<sup>th</sup> - The sacrifice was made in a **temporary tabernacle** - mobile sanctuary - until the temple in Jerusalem. Perhaps there's a **better sanctuary** - **not made by human hands**?

**And why can't God just forgive us without there having to be punishment of animals or punishment for us?**

*Perhaps it makes more sense if we think of **God's getting rid of our sins** as being **like Him discharging** of a **debt** we owe.*

*Imagine you have **broken the law** and face a **\$50,000 fine**. You tell the judge that you are **truly sorry** for your crime, but the **judge** responds "I certainly hope so. You've broken the law. Now, **pay this fine.**"*

You reply "No, **I can't pay it**. This debt is too much for me to pay. I promise **I won't do it again** – just **let me off with the fine**." and the judge says "**I can't do that. The law requires that you pay this fine** or face prison. I would be a **corrupt judge** if I just let you **off Scott free**. **Someone has** got to **pay the penalty**."

You begin to **despair** because you know the **judge cannot** just simply **let you off**, but **neither** can **you save yourself from this massive debt**. Suddenly, something takes you by surprise. The **judge** steps down from his bench and walks over to you. Then he **reaches** into his **pocket** and takes out his **wallet**, handing you **\$50,000 in cash** saying that **he will pay the fine for you** (if you accept his offer).

This is **equivalent** to our **sin situation**.

We have all strayed from God's laws (Romans 3:23 – **All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory**), and are therefore we are **guilty** before Him, **deserving death** (Romans 6:23a – the Wages of sin is death).

**God has to punish evil because He is just** (Psalm 9:7-8, Psalm 9:16, Psalm 11:16). If He did not punish us, He **wouldn't be a just judge**, just as the judge in the illustration wouldn't be just if he had let the fine go unpaid. So, **God must punish us**. However, God is also loving (1 John 4:8, 1 John 4:16) and he **doesn't want to punish us** for our sins. Just **like** the **judge** in the illustration, **God stepped down** from His **throne**, taking on **human flesh** (John 1:14, Philippians 2:5-8), and was punished in our place. He **transferred the penalty of sin to His Son** – who was **crucified** for sin.

God has given us a better way – to be forgiven of our sins than the animal sacrifices of the OT

You see, the **animal sacrifices in the OT** are a bit like **credit cards**.

Credit cards don't actually pay for anything, but they allow us to walk out of the shop with our purchases - **the debt remains** - until we pay for it later.

Like-wise animal sacrifices never fully discharged the debt - they allowed people to walk away forgiven - but the sacrifices had to be repeated over and over.

The **animal sacrifices** were a **shadow** of what was **to come** in the **perfect sacrifice** of **Jesus'** - God's son

[PowerPoint 6b-Rom 3:25]

See our Romans 3 passage and verse 25 - God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished

And notice it's God the **Father who presented** His Son Jesus -

Jesus didn't satisfy a reluctant and unwilling to forgive, Father, so that He would hold back His anger - No! God the **Father willingly and lovingly initiated this rescue mission** by sending His Son

In this verse there's also the point that **through the animal sacrifices** of the **OT, those who looked in faith** to the **coming** of Jesus - the **Messiah** - had their **sins "covered"** by a sort of **IOU** or promissory note. That temporary covering was fully paid when Jesus went to the cross

Those **sins** of the **OT people** which **God left unpunished** were **finally paid for at the cross**.

This verse shows that **Jesus is a once and for all sacrifice** for sins and He makes atonement - for us

The word used in **Greek** for the **sacrifice of atonement** - is referring back to the **atonement cover** on the ark of the covenant

**Jesus is the one that satisfies God's anger over our sin - once and for all!**

**Jesus is our propitiation - our mercy seat**

The **mercy seat** sits on **top** of the **ark** of the covenant - and **inside** the **ark** is the **evidence** of human's **rebellion against God** - the **10 commandments** on tablets which all **humans can't fully keep**, the **manna received ungratefully** in the wilderness, the budding of **Aaron's rod** a symbol of **human's rejection of God's leadership** (Num 16)

Up **over** the **Ark** of the Covenant were the **symbols** of the **holy presence** of the enthroned **God** in the beautiful **gold cherubim**. In between the two stood the **mercy seat**, and as **sacrificial blood** was **sprinkled on the mercy seat** on the Day of Atonement ([Leviticus 16](#)), **God's wrath** was **averted** because a **substitute** had been **slain** on behalf of sinners coming by faith. We really can say that **Jesus is our "mercy seat,"** standing between guilty sinners and the holiness of God.

Therefore, there is **no need for animal sacrifices** because

**Jesus is a better and perfect sacrifice**

- He is **sinless** unlike the High priest - so He **doesn't** have to **make** the **sacrifice** for His own sin
- He is an **everlasting High Priest** - the OT High Priests died - Jesus is a **forever priest** in forever priesthood

- So, **His sacrifice doesn't** have to be **repeated day after day** - year after year - on the day of Yom Kippur - Jesus had that one day - **Good Friday** - when He set the record straight on sin
- The **OT High priest was a go-between** the people and God - He was the only who could enter into the Holy Place - behind the curtain. At Jesus' death the **curtain in the temple was torn in two** and now gives us all **direct access to God**
- And **Jesus gives us access** to a **better sanctuary** - not made by human hands - that is **Heaven** - where we can live with God forever

### Our Response

#### [PowerPoint 7-Faith]

**How** are we to **respond** to Jesus - this better **sacrifice** - this propitiation?

Look at key verse 25 again - and it says Jesus' sacrifice is to **be received by faith**.

**We can't make the sacrifice ourselves.**

**We can't pay the debt of our sin ourselves by working** our way to **forgiveness** and **working** our way to **Heaven**.

**We** have to **simply believe** in this sacrifice of Jesus - and have **faith** in Him

#### [PowerPoint 8-Repentance/Reject]

But with faith comes - **repentance**

As Isaiah 55:7 says: **Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.**

And as Acts 3:19 says: **Repent**, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the LORD

But if we reject Jesus, as John 3:36 says:

<sup>36</sup>Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but **whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.**

In the same way that if **we** were to **reject** the **judge's** offer to **pay** our **fine** for us, if we **reject Jesus** sacrifice, our **sin-debt** will remain **unpaid** - and God will still be angry about sin!

[PowerPoint 9-sacrificial lives]

So, **having repented** and put our **faith** in **Jesus**, our response should be as the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 12:1

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, **in view of God's mercy**, to **offer** your **bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

**Because of Jesus' huge sacrifice - let's be sacrificial in our lives - not to save ourselves - but to show our thanks for Jesus.**

Perhaps that can be our **New Year's Resolution - living sacrificially for God...**

[sacrificial of our time, our talents, our lives, our possessions, our money]

Let's pray...