

God Is Propitiated

Introduction:

1. Throughout the texts of both the Old Testament and the New the wrath of God against sin is prominent.
2. God's anger is no capricious passion, like that of a man who flies off the handle when he is inconvenienced.
3. God's anger is the reaction of His divine nature against evil. God's wrath against sin must be dealt with if man is to escape its penalty.
4. A N.T. word group that addresses this issue is "hiloskomai" usually translated in the English "propitiation." (In our recent studies in 1 John we came across this concept in 2:2 which says, "Christ is the propitiation for our sins.")
5. It is one of those words that is often glossed over, mispronounced and shrouded in mystery, but a key concept in our understanding of the scheme of redemption.
6. What does it mean? How is it used in Scripture? And what is its relationship with the wrath of God?

Discussion:

I. The wrath of God in Scripture.

- A. Is aroused by the sin that stems from not believing God and not trusting in His salvation (Psa. 78:21-22).
 1. Israel repeatedly turned their back on the goodness of God.
 2. He established a special relationship with them and asked them to teach their children about the mighty works He had done for them (78:5-7).
 3. But they refused to walk in His law. They forgot His deeds.
 4. Even though He wrought wonders among them.
 5. They rebelled.
 6. The anger of god arose against them (31); He killed them (34).
- B. Ezekiel is very graphic in his communication of the wrath of God in Ezekiel 14.
 1. Famine.
 2. Wild beasts.
 3. Sword.
 4. Plague.
- C. The vision of execution (Ezek. 9:1-10).
- D. Do not get the idea that God's anger here is capricious. The wrath described here is not against accidental sins, occasional violations, sins committed because they did not know any better. The wrath of God in this text is against their rebellion.
 1. Don't misunderstand, accidental sins, occasional violations and sins committed because they did not know any better fell under the wrath of God too, but God made provision for dealing with such infractions with the sacrificial system and thus provided forgiveness.

2. But the wrath of God is clearly evident against rebellion.
 3. It is also evident against occasional sins (Num. 30:22ff).
 4. Much like a parent, God deals graciously with sin committed unwittingly. Rebellion is dealt with differently and yet even here God's graciousness comes through (Ezek. 16:60ff).
- E. It is personal (Ezek. 7:8; Jer. 23:20; Isa. 30:27-31; Psa. 60:1-3).
- F. O.T. and N.T. no different (Heb. 2:1-3; 4:4-8; 10:28-31).

II. Propitiation addresses God's wrath against sin.

- A. The term is used . . .
1. In Lk. 18:13: "God be propitious to me, the sinner."
 2. Heb. 2:17: Jesus is a high priest "to make propitiation for the sins of the people."
 3. Rom. 3:25 Christ is "a propitiation in His blood through faith."
 4. Heb. 9:5 it refers to the mercy seat.
 5. Christ is the "propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 2:2).
 6. God sent His Son "to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn. 4:10).
- B. The concept was used by the idolatrous Greeks to denote their efforts to appease or placate their gods.
1. Their idea was that if the gods were angry with you that you could bring them a gift and that would soften their attitude, diminish their anger and perhaps you could avoid the consequences of their wrath.
 2. The word carries the sense of "making gracious."
 3. When applied to men it was even used in the sense of bribing someone.
- C. These are not the senses in which the word is used in the N.T. Instead of men making the god's gracious, it is God who satisfies His own wrath in the giving of His son. Thus, He responds to our sin and His own wrath against us.
1. It is a radical and unique concept. There is no other religion where God turns away His own wrath satisfying His own anger with a sacrifice that He gives.
 2. Micah reminds us of this unique aspect of God's character in 7:18-19.
"Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

III. Such is the essence of the scheme of redemption.

- A. It is founded upon the unique character of God.
1. A God of justice, anger, wrath against sin. We are to be in awe of the judgment we deserve.
 2. But our terror is relieved by God's willingness to satisfy His own wrath with the sacrifice of His own Son.
- B. It is the kindness of God and His love for mankind that results in our redemption through Jesus Christ (Titus 3:4-7).

- C. This is the message that penetrates hearts and turns men toward God.
1. This is the message that we must preach clearly and boldly.
 2. God is not capricious in His wrath against sin.
 3. God is not a demanding ogre that can never be pleased.
 4. He has satisfied His own wrath against sin. What more could be done to demonstrate His willingness to be in relationship with us? The question is how will we respond to Him?

Conclusion:

1. Will you respond in faith?
2. Will you accept His kindness?
3. Will you accept His propitiation in Jesus Christ?
4. Or turn your back on it, despising His grace?