

Bible Basics Conference 2010: Results of Christ's Death

Part 2

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[00:00:00] Well, what Mike has brought before us has certainly been a good introduction to this wonderful subject. I must get by the microphones, mustn't I? This wonderful subject of the death of the Lord Jesus and what is accomplished for God and His glory and for us and our blessing.

And now we're going to look at these two subjects of propitiation and substitution.

Now very often when we look at the death of Christ, we do find that the words that we have in English to describe the results of His death are quite long words, propitiation, substitution. And perhaps some of us who are younger are a little bit intimidated by them, but one way perhaps to look at them is to see that the results of Christ's death are so wonderful that they have to be explained by these large words.

[00:01:02] The fullness of what He's done is conveyed by the length of these words.

Propitiation and substitution.

First of all, I'm going to talk about atonement. We already had the word atonement mentioned.

If you don't understand my pictures, don't worry about it. Most people don't understand them.

Atonement is an Old Testament term which is closely related to one of our subjects, propitiation.

Now if you look at the footnote, atonement in Romans chapter 5 verse 11, we'll just read this verse out.

It comes at the end of a beautiful passage in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 5.

[00:02:09] And it says after Paul has gone through all the blessings related to the work of the Lord Jesus for us upon the cross.

And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have now received the atonement.

But many of us will know that that is an incorrect translation.

It should say at the end of the verse, the reconciliation.

And the word atonement doesn't actually occur in the New Testament. It's an Old Testament word, but it is closely related to the subject of propitiation.

So we've got to really speak about it first before we can get onto the matter of propitiation. [00:03:03]
The Hebrew word to atone means to cover.

That's why we've got a book cover on our slide. In the sense of shelter from God's judgment.

Sin deserves God's judgment.

So we need something or someone acceptable to God to atone for our sins, to cover us from the judgment which must inevitably fall upon us because of our sins.

Now there are many examples of this in the Old Testament. Genesis chapter 3 verse 21.

You can look at these as we go along or at home.

We find that Adam and Eve have sinned as we've had brought before us by Michael. And immediately they feel naked in the presence of God. [00:04:01] And in fact, they've already gone to the trouble of making aprons of fig leaves for themselves. But God provides them a covering, the skins of animals.

But the important thing was they felt naked in the sight of God. They needed to be covered. Sin had come in and there had been this sense created in them of the fact that they were exposed to God's judgment, exposed to his displeasure.

In Genesis chapter 6 verse 14, we have the flood, a very powerful picture of God's judgment.

Noah and his wife and his three sons and their wives, they were in the ark.

In order to preserve, be preserved from that judgment, the ark was covered with pitch inside [00:05:04] and outside.

In Exodus chapter 12 verse 7, when God's judgment came upon Egypt, in order for the people of Israel to be preserved from it, the blood of the Passover lamb had to be put on the doorposts and the lintels of their houses. And then God promised in verse 13 that when the angel of that judgment, the angel that would carry out that judgment came to the land, he would pass over their homes. They would be sheltered by the blood.

In chapter 13 verses 11 to 16, we get the atonement money. Each male of 20 years old and upwards had to pay when the people of Israel were numbered, the half shekel of the sanctuary in order that

there might be no plague upon the people of Israel.

In order that they were covered, it was atonement money. [00:06:03] It was to do with the sanctuary, the fact that the presence of God was with them. That payment had to be made in order that they might be preserved from God's judgment, covered from God's judgment. And in Leviticus chapters 1 and 4, we have first the burnt offering, which Michael has brought before us, and then the sin offering. And both those offerings, they provide atonement for the one who brings the offering.

In one case, he puts his hand on the offering and all the value of that burnt offering is transferred to him. In the other case, he puts his hand on the offering, the sin offering, and all his sin is transferred to the offering and the offering takes the judgment he deserves.

So he's covered, he's atoned for in the presence of God.

Atonement in the Old and New Testament, it's a matter of value. [00:07:04] The Old Testament offerings, atonement money, etc., had no intrinsic value.

They couldn't really atone for sins.

But they symbolized, they pointed to a person who does.

And we've already had him brought before us, the Lord Jesus Christ. And these verses from Hebrews, I won't read them now because we haven't got enough time, they show that in the Old Testament, you couldn't really go into the presence of God. Only the high priest could do that once a year on the Day of Atonement. The others couldn't. That showed that the work had not yet been done that really atones for our sins before God. The Day of Atonement pointed to something that would really atone for our sins, the [00:08:01] death of Christ.

And that's emphasized again in chapter 10, verse 14, and of course we know these verses from Peter chapter 1, verses 18 to 19, which tell us we've not been redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold. These things such as the blood of animals, the atonement money, the silver that was presented then, they had no real intrinsic value, but the precious blood of Christ is the blood by which we are covered in the presence of God.

The New Testament is based on the fact of his death, of course. It presents us his death and goes into the truth of the atoning value of his death in much fuller detail than the Old Testament can. Using terms like ransom, a price paid to set someone free.

I won't say too much about that because we haven't got much time and someone else is going to deal with that aspect of the death of Christ, too, because that comes into the matter of redemption.

[00:09:02] Sorry, this is a rather dark slide. It's not meant to be. It's a bright slide.

So what does the word propitiation mean? Well, it goes a bit further than simply the matter of covering us before God because of our sin.

The Greek word means vindicating God, upholding God's holiness and righteousness, indeed all his attributes as Michael has brought before us because he wants to bless us. It's what he desires to do.

Don't get it into your mind that propitiation means appeasing or placating him, trying to get him to treat us well. That's the concept the Greeks had in connection with their gods. So God desires to bless us, but he's a holy and righteous God, so he has to be vindicated in his holiness and righteousness about the question of sin so that all that love he desires to bestow upon us can be released and we can enjoy it and he will be glorified in that.

[00:10:08] It's a Godward thought because its primary purpose is to glorify him about the question of sin.

Now I mentioned that verse from Romans chapter 5 which had the word atonement in it, but really it's the word reconciliation. But propitiation does really come in to the book of Romans in chapter 3. It tells us in chapter 3 that the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all has been brought to light and this is important because if God is to be glorified about the question of sin then it has to be consistent with his righteousness.

[00:11:02] And we see here at the end of this verse something I'm going to mention a little later on. It's unto all and it's upon all them that believe.

So in propitiation we're seeing the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.

And this is what is brought to light in the gospel in the New Testament. God presents the Lord Jesus, we've had him in that first verse, chapter 3 verse 22, presented in connection with our faith in him. God presents him as his mercy seat and this word mercy seat is very closely related to the word propitiation and it's through faith in his blood that the Lord Jesus is a mercy seat for us.

And in this is demonstrated God's righteousness in the past because during the time that those [00:12:07] animal sacrifices were being brought to him as we've already thought. They weren't really dealing with the question of sin. They were only pointing through to the Lord Jesus, pointing to the Lord Jesus. So really he was overlooking those sins in that sense.

He wasn't dealing with them because people were offering these sacrifices but those sacrifices didn't really deal with them. They pointed to the one sacrifice of Christ that would deal with them. But when that one sacrifice was made God was proved to be righteous in what he had done in the past and he's proved to be righteous now in offering salvation to us who live after the cross, who look back at that death of the Lord Jesus upon the cross. So God's righteousness, hence the picture of the old baby, not St. Paul's Cathedral. [00:13:02] God's righteousness has been vindicated by the death of the Lord Jesus and he's enabled to be the just one, which he is, and yet at the same time to be the justifier of him which believes in Jesus.

These two things are brought together in the death of Christ. He is enabled to be what he is, the just one.

The judge of all the earth shall he not do right? Yes indeed, because he's the just one. But then if he's the just one how can he vindicate, justify the sinner and still be just? You say it's impossible, it's a conundrum, we can't make it add up. But in the person of the Lord Jesus in his death God is enabled to be just and the one who justifies the sinner.

This is because he's been glorified about the question of sin by the death of the Lord Jesus, the truth of propitiation. Now quickly, why refer, why does Paul refer to the mercy seat in the tabernacle? [00:14:05] Why is this thought of the mercy seat brought in?

Well, the mercy seat was on the ark in the Holy of Holies where God sat as it were, put it in inverted commas there, sat between the cherubim, those beings that looked after the interests of God in the universe.

They were pictured in these two figures overshadowing the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle God's righteousness, God's holiness was being watched for in that tabernacle.

[00:15:06] And yet that tabernacle was in the center of the camp of the people of Israel.

How could such a holy God dwell among such a people who we know from their history were marked by sin?

Well, once a year on the day of atonement, the high priest sprinkled the blood of the goat of the sin offering, which was the offering for the people on the mercy seat so that the cherubim could see it and before the mercy seat seven times.

And that enabled God to continue dwelling among his people and enabled his people to continue to feel at home with him there in the midst of them. That's brought before us in Leviticus chapter 16 verse 15 and Hebrews chapter 9 verse 7. And Paul uses that day of atonement, what happened on that day when the high priest [00:16:06] did those things, when he took the blood into the Holy of Holies and sprinkled it on the mercy seat so that God could continue to dwell among his people and they could continue to enjoy his presence among them as a picture of what has been accomplished in a perfect way by the Lord Jesus upon the cross of Calvary. God has been glorified about the question of sin and therefore the blessing he desires to give us, he desires in fact to commune with us just as in a way we can see this in the way in which he dwelt among his people Israel. He desires to have us at home with him. How can this be accomplished when we think of our sin only by the fact that the precious blood of the Lord Jesus has been shed for us, for the glory of God, for the glory of [00:17:04] God for us.

So what have we learned about propitiation? Well I hope we've learned this, all our sin is unrighteousness against God. In fact the three classes of people mentioned in the letter to the Romans, the barbarian, the one who has no thought towards God at all, the moral person who thinks he's alright with God and the Jew, they're all described in those sections in that letter that speak about them as having unrighteousness or being unrighteous and because of that it must be put right if God is to be glorified about the question of sin. The Lord Jesus did this once for all when he offered one sacrifice for sin and that's in Hebrews chapter 2 verse 17 and also in the passage chapter 10 verses 1 to 18.

[00:18:01] And incidentally in verse 17 the word reconciliation occurs when it shouldn't. In that particular case it should be translated propitiation. In fact we'll read it just so that we can be absolutely sure.

Hebrews chapter 2 verse 17, that wherefore in all things it behoved him, that's the Lord Jesus, to be made like unto his brethren that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make, now it shouldn't be reconciliation, it should be propitiation for the sins of the people.

In Hebrews we'll often find the writer alluding to the day of atonement as he explains to [00:19:03] his readers what the Lord Jesus has accomplished for the glory of God and for their blessing. And this provides a righteous basis for God's offer of love and blessing to all and we've already had these verses mentioned. John chapter 3 verse 16 and 1 Corinthians chapter 15 where the apostle Paul going back to what he had preached to the Corinthians when he had first come across them he said Moreover brethren I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you which also ye have received and wherein ye stand by which also ye are saved if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you unless ye have believed in vain for I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. This brings this wonderful thought before us because the apostle Paul is talking about what he preached to them at that time before they were Christians that Christ had died [00:20:04] for their sins. In propitiation God is glorified and God makes his offer of blessing to all.

And John confirms this in his first letter Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins actual effect and not for ours alone but also for the whole world.

He doesn't actually say the sins of the whole world in that verse as it does in the authorized version.

They can't really say that unless they've believed but the scope of the work of Christ in propitiation is for the whole world is his potential effect. The world just came into view a bit too quickly then and he adds also later on in the letter here in his love this is the love of God coming out on the basis of what's been accomplished by the Lord Jesus not that we love God but that he loved us sent his son his only begotten [00:21:06] his world beloved son to be the propitiation for our sins. God has been glorified by his son about the question of that which dishonored him our sins and that's enabled him to give the best to us as a result.

But we must be a whosoever believeth are you a whosoever believeth? Are you one of those who can say yes I'm in those two words I'm one of those who's believed. We cannot benefit from propitiation unless these words in Romans them that believe these are in the verses we had on a previous slide faith in his blood and him which believes in Jesus are true of us and that's where substitution comes in. I picked this picture because it shows the idea of substitution someone taking the place of someone else there's probably not many other thoughts that you can connect between [00:22:01] the truth of substitution and football but that's probably the only one that we need to think about at the moment. The word substitution isn't found in scripture but the truth is the use of one person or thing instead of another is very much part of scripture. We've already had the thought of Isaac and Abraham or Abraham and Isaac in chapter 22 verse 13 when Abraham was about to slay his son in obedience to God the angel interposed and what did Abraham find behind him a ram caught in the thicket by its horns and he offered that up instead in the place of as a substitute for Isaac because Isaac is a double picture of what happened at the cross and in 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 18 the truth of substitution comes out again let's just read this verse 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 18 [00:23:06] for Christ also have once suffered for sins the just for the unjust you can't get a clearer idea of substitution but in that verse that he might bring us to God.

It's us-ward propitiation is God-ward substitution is us-ward because each one of us needs to believe on the Lord Jesus as the one who has suffered and died on our behalf in order to save us substitution on the day of atonement let's go back to the day of atonement I mentioned there was a goat that was killed and its blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat but there was a second goat that day did you know that the high priest took a second goat and he had to lay his hands on the goat and

confess the sins of the people of Israel over [00:24:02] it before it was led away to the wilderness to bear those sins in a land apart you can read about it in Leviticus chapter 16 verses 20 to 22 and it's also mentioned by the writer to the Hebrews in chapter 10 verse 17 of that letter and that's what the Lord Jesus did for us in reality in reality on the cross but we can only say he did it for us if we believe on him as our saviour if we like the high priest have confessed our sins as it were over him we've trusted him we've said Lord Jesus I believe you've taken my place that's what substitution involves God reckons counts his righteousness to us if we believe on the Lord Jesus because he was delivered for our offences raised for our justification Romans chapter 4 verse 25 incidentally the Lord Jesus doesn't give us righteousness because [00:25:06] of his law keeping in his life that's a wrong thought we get it from his death and resurrection so he's taken our place he was delivered for our offences raised again for our justification Isaiah says he was wounded for our transgressions he was bruised for our iniquities the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we're healed that's a wonderful verse from the Old Testament which brings before us substitution the people of Israel in a future day will take up this verse and they will confess it for themselves that it was true on that cross although they said crucify him crucify him there he was taken their place but we can put our names individually in this verse he was wounded for Simon's transgressions he [00:26:06] was bruised for Simon's iniquities the chastisement of Simon's peace was upon him and with his stripes Simon is healed that is what each one of us can say if we've trusted the Lord Jesus as our saviour the all and the many comes out as well remember we talked about that verse which showed the potential extent of the work of the Lord Jesus it's to all when we think of his work of propitiation but when it's substitution it's only for those who believe those who said yes he was there for me from the point of view of propitiation God desires all men to be saved so the Lord Jesus gave himself a ransom for all and these verses that I've mentioned there convey the thought of propitiation extending to all from [00:27:06] substitution standpoint he came to give his life a ransom for many and was once offered to bear the sins of many and this is the side which is emphasised in these verses so propitiation and substitution go together we can't benefit from propitiation unless the Lord Jesus is our substitute what the Lord Jesus has accomplished for God's glory so that God can bestow his love cannot be ours if we haven't made the Lord Jesus our substitute but he can only be our substitute if we believe on him as the one who has in propitiation glorified God about the question of sin so that he can bless us so much hands much hands on these thoughts of propitiation for believers we look at Christ's death we [00:28:04] see it glorifies God about the question of sin he's laid a righteous basis for all God's operations of blessing towards us even new birth which makes us children John's writings and the many spiritual blessings he bestows on us such as acceptance that's a wonderful thought acceptance comes out in the letter to the Ephesians without the Lord Jesus glorifying God about the question of sin we wouldn't enjoy these things as believers and in substitution Christ's death proves his great love to us each one of us by suffering God's judgment on our behalf not our behalf I've used the word behalf to emphasise it's an individual thing to secure the benefits of propitiation for us so that we can be assured of enjoying them now and for all eternity may these things really encourage us and make us thankful to [00:29:07] the Lord for his great love towards us