

III

The Justice of God

ROMANS 3:25-26

...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.

READ | ROMANS 3:25–26

THINK ABOUT

Do you know and understand what propitiation means? It is a rich theological term that means that Christ's death on the cross appeased God's wrath and satisfied the justice He requires concerning our sin (1 John 4:10). In the Old Testament, the Hebrew equivalent of this word was used to describe the Mercy Seat — the place in the tabernacle where the high priest would sprinkle blood from a slain animal on the Day of Atonement to ceremonially make atonement for the sins of the people (Leviticus 16:14–16).

We know that we cannot satisfy God's justice and wrath by our own works. Therefore, Jesus experienced the wrath of God on the cross as a propitiation for our sins. Jesus' great sacrifice was not done in secret, but God put Him "forward" in a public display for all to see on the cross. He died the death that we should have died so that by "faith" our sins are covered by "His blood" (v. 25).

APPLY

The right response to Christ's great sacrifice as the propitiation for our sins is to trust Him by faith. We do that by confessing our sins and asking for His forgiveness. The debt has been paid in full for all who trust in Him: "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" (v. 26). Give thanks to God today for the blessing that His Son's death on the cross was the satisfaction for your sins!

ASK

Am I right with God?

Has the blood of Christ covered my sins?

PRAY

Praise God for His righteous response to sin.

Confess your need for His grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

Pray for someone who is facing the wrath of God.

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SING

“Wonderful, Merciful Savior” — *Selah*

THE BIG IDEA

People often divorce the justice of God from the love of God. Here, Paul shows how salvation is inseparably linked to God's justice and love. God's justice requires that sin be atoned individually and collectively. Seeing that both the law and human attempts are inadequate to meet divine demands, the Father, through His love for mankind, sent His Son to atone for sin on the cross.

KEY POINTS

Christ is the propitiation for man's sin (v. 25a).

Reunion with God comes only through faith (v. 25b).

Salvation reveals the righteousness of God, the just and justifier (v. 26).

DOCTRINE

Propitiation is a term that shows how Christ satisfied the righteous demands of a holy God.

Salvation is the biblical idea of deliverance from sin and its consequence.

LIFE APPLICATION

God is both the judge who pronounces us guilty and the One who justifies us.

Forgiveness of sin can only be received through faith in Christ.

One can only come into relationship with God on the conditions established by Him.

DISCUSSION

Compare God's love with the human concept of love.


How is the love of God anchored in His nature?

How is the justice of God similar and dissimilar to the justice of the world?

“THE JUSTICE OF GOD”

Romans 3:25-26

A series of horizontal dotted lines for taking notes.

A detailed close-up photograph of classical architectural carvings. The image shows a section of a column capital, featuring a prominent volute (scroll) and several layers of acanthus leaves. The stone is light-colored and shows signs of weathering and age. The lighting creates strong shadows, highlighting the intricate details of the carvings.

FOR CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED
ONCE FOR SINS, THE RIGHTEOUS
FOR THE UNRIGHTEOUS,
THAT HE MIGHT BRING US TO GOD,
BEING PUT TO DEATH IN THE FLESH
BUT MADE ALIVE IN THE SPIRIT

1 PETER 3:18