

Romans 3:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Analysis

Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. The theological heart of Romans: *hon proetheto ho theos hilastērion* (ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεός ἱλαστήριον, "whom God set forth as a propitiation"). *Hilastērion* (ἱλαστήριον)—the mercy seat where sacrificial blood was sprinkled on Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16:14-15), or more broadly, a propitiatory sacrifice that satisfies divine wrath.

Dia pisteōs en tō autou haimati (διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι, "through faith in his blood")—appropriated by faith, grounded in Christ's blood. Purpose: *eis endeixin tēs dikaiosynēs autou* (εἰς ἔνδειξιν τῆς δικαιοσύνης αὐτοῦ, "to demonstrate his righteousness") because of *paresin tōn progegonotōn hamartēmatōn* (πάρεσιν τῶν προγεγονότων ἁμαρτημάτων, "passing over of former sins") in *anochē tou theou* (ἀνοχῇ τοῦ θεοῦ, "forbearance of God"). God's pre-cross patience in not immediately judging sin raised questions about His justice—answered at Calvary.

Historical Context

The Day of Atonement was Judaism's central ceremony for dealing with sin. Paul declares Christ as the ultimate *hilasterion*—not a mere symbol but the reality. His blood accomplishes what animal sacrifices foreshadowed: actual propitiation of

divine wrath, demonstrating God is both just (punishing sin) and justifier (saving sinners).

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does the word "propitiation" change your understanding of the cross—not just example but satisfaction of divine justice?
2. Why was it necessary for God to demonstrate His righteousness by punishing sin in Christ?
3. How does this verse answer the question: How can God be just and justify sinners?

Interlinear Text

ὃν	προέθετο	ὁ	θεοῦ	ἱλαστήριον	διὰ	τῆς	πίστεως
Whom	hath set forth	God	to be a propitiation	for		faith	
G3739	G4388	G3588 G2316	G2435	G1223	G3588	G4102	
ἐν	τῷ	αὐτοῦ	αἵματι	εἰς	ἐνδειξιν	τῆς	δικαιοσύνης
in	his	blood	to	declare	righteousness		
G1722	G3588 G846	G129	G1519	G1732	G3588 G1343		
αὐτοῦ	διὰ	τὴν	πάρεσιν	τῶν	προγεγονότων		
his	for	the remission	that are past				
G846	G1223	G3588 G3929	G4266				
ἁμαρτημάτων	ἐν	τῇ	ἀνοχῇ	τοῦ	θεοῦ		
of sins	in	the forbearance	God				
G265	G1722	G3588 G463	G3588 G2316				

Additional Cross-References

1 John 4:10 (Sin): Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1 John 2:2 (Sin): And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Acts 17:30 (References God): And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Romans 5:9 (Righteousness): Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Hebrews 10:4 (Sin): For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

Revelation 13:8 (Parallel theme): And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Hebrews 11:7 (Faith): By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

Psalms 22:31 (Righteousness): They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this.

Leviticus 16:15 (Sin): Then shall he kill the goat of the sin offering, that is for the people, and bring his blood within the vail, and do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it upon the mercy seat, and before the mercy seat:

Romans 5:1 (Faith): Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: