

So Great Salvation

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Chapter Seven

GOD'S JUSTICE SATISFIED

In the preceding chapter the value of the death of CHRIST as a ransom price to redeem man from the penalty of the law was seen. CHRIST's death was seen to be on behalf of man. In this chapter an additional value, a value to GOD Himself in the death of CHRIST, is to be considered. Failure to recognize that there is a value to GOD in the death of CHRIST is the cause of much misunderstanding and false teaching.

Salvation is a work of GOD on behalf of man, but in order that He might do this work He had to also do something on behalf of Himself. GOD in love longed to save man from the consequences of Adam's sin. Even as soon as Adam sinned GOD came in the cool of the evening and called Adam and said, "**Where art thou?**" GOD's loving heart has ever gone out to save fallen man. Few are aware of this important fact.

But He Who is love is also infinitely righteous. He is also unchangeable. GOD's infinite and unchangeable righteousness and justice demanded that the penalty of His law which the creature, man, had broken, must be imposed and the execution of it carried out. GOD's infinite justice therefore limited His Own love. If GOD was to save man, He had to do something on behalf of Himself so that He could remove the consequences of sin without compromising justice.

And GOD's love did find a way by which the limitation by justice would be met and removed. "**Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins**" (I John

4:10). **"And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world"** (1 John 2:2).

To understand the meaning of these verses it is necessary to understand the meaning of the word propitiation. It is "*that which . . . appeases [or satisfies] the divine justice and conciliates [or wins over] the divine favor.*"

The meaning of the above verses, then, is that love is expressed in that GOD sent His SON to satisfy His Own justice and to make it possible for Him to extend favor to man. This expression of love is not only for those who are saved but for all mankind.

It is well to be here reminded of that which constituted the demand of GOD's justice and how JESUS CHRIST satisfied that demand. GOD's justice demanded death because of transgression of His law. **"The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"** (Genesis 2:17). GOD's love could not remit that penalty. It could not set it aside. His wrath against the unrighteousness of man must take its course.

When the Son of GOD was sent He came into the world as a man. He lived here thirty-three years as a man and in every detail of His life He satisfied all that GOD's justice demanded. Then He voluntarily went to the Cross. He, the CREATOR of man was, by wicked men, nailed to the Cross. There sin, as rebellion against GOD, reached its climax. And then as He hung on the Cross GOD laid upon Him the sins of the whole human race. **"And the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"** (Isaiah 53:6). That included the first sin by Adam. It also included every sin of every one of the seed of Adam born up to that time and even more, the sins of all men yet to be born. The sins of all were laid upon Him. Then GOD's judgment upon sin fell upon Him. **"And . . . Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying . . . My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me? And . . . when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost"** (Matthew 27:46, 50).

Here was death because of the sins of mankind. It was a double death; spiritual death because in being forsaken by GOD He was separated from Him and physical death in yielding up the ghost. And that is exactly the curse that rested upon man because of sin. **"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him"** (Isaiah 53:5).

The demands of GOD's justice had been met. The justice of GOD is no longer a restraining influence to prevent Him from saving those who will come to Him by the only way (John 14:6), even by JESUS CHRIST, who is the propitiation for our sins.

There is a statement in the Bible that clearly states that GOD's purpose in sending His Son was on His own behalf. It was that He might remain just and save the sinner. It is found in Paul's great treatise on justification by faith. He there declares that GOD set forth CHRIST as a propitiation that GOD might ". . . **be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus**" (Romans 3:25-26). According to this GOD could not remain just and justify any sinner apart from the fact that the demands of His justice were met by JESUS CHRIST when He died on the Cross.

Dr. C.I. Scofield in his note on Romans 3:25 calls attention to the fact that the Greek word which is here translated "propitiation" is also used in Hebrews 9:5 where it is translated "mercy seat." The Cross then, where propitiation was made, because judgment was passed upon sin, became the place where GOD shows mercy. This is the essential meaning of the Cross of CHRIST. He who will come to the Cross as the place where his own sins have been judged in the Person of CHRIST will receive mercy at the hand of GOD. Because of the cross, grace becomes sovereign and reigns unto eternal life. "**That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord**" (Romans 5:21).

Throughout the ages of human existence man has realized that there is a wrath of GOD that needs to be appeased before man can come unto Him, but relatively few, indeed very few, know that GOD Himself has provided a propitiation. After Adam had sinned he hid, because, as he said, "**I was afraid**" (Genesis 3:10). Ever since then there has been in the heart of man a fear to meet GOD because of His supposed wrath toward man. Mythology is filled with stories of men trying to appease their gods. So also the heathen go to great excesses trying to appease their gods. And the feeling that something is demanded of man to satisfy the vengeance of GOD is far from lacking in even so-called Christian lands. Every thought of man that something can be done to lessen his punishment in the hereafter is a confession that he feels that the wrath of GOD needs to be appeased and that GOD is not favorably inclined unto him.

The central truth of the Gospel, the good news, is of the grace of GOD, and that which is so little understood, is that the wrath of GOD against all unrighteousness of man has been appeased in the death of His Own Son. His justice has been satisfied and now GOD, in love, is longing to extend pardon and peace to all who will come to Him by the way of the Cross.