

REVISITING THE BELIEVER'S POSITIONAL RICHES IN CHRIST

Part IV: Applying The Truth That Believers Are Related To God Through Propitiation

I. Introduction

- A. Many false religions put man under pressure to try to **appease** God in some way in order to gain salvation.
- B. However, even some **Christians** fear that though they are saved, some **dreadful pre-salvation sin** they have committed or an **awful post-salvation sin** they have done may cause God to refuse to accept or bless them or even allow them to enter heaven at the end of their lives on earth.
- C. One of the riches of God's grace for the believer (as listed by Lewis Sperry Chafer in his Systematic Theology, vol. III, "Soteriology," p. 237-238) is the fact that believers in Christ are related to God through "propitiation," a truth we examine in this lesson with its edifying application that addresses these very concerns (as follows):

II. Applying The Truth That Believers Are Related To God Through Propitiation.

- A. To appreciate the doctrine of propitiation, we view the **whole** doctrine's *application* (as follows):
 1. At the **first** level, the doctrine of propitiation affects the **WORLD**:
 - a. The substitutionary death of Christ for all sinners in the world so **fully appeased** the **WRATH** of a holy God against sinners that Christ is the "Propitiation" for the sins of "the **whole WORLD**," 1 John 2:2.
 - b. This truth bears immeasurable value for the **unsaved** (as follows):
 - i. God's wrath against the sins of lost men has been so fully expended by the cross of Christ that God is "propitious" toward them all, fully willing to relate to them without any anger due to their sins.
 - ii. This was seen in God's tearing the veil in the holiest of holies of the temple from top to bottom at Christ's death, depicting God's earnest desire to fellowship with the lost world, Matthew 27:50-51.
 - iii. The lost thus need only to trust alone in Christ alone to be saved, Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16.
 2. At the **second** level, the doctrine of propitiation affects the **BELIEVER**:
 - a. Being the "Propitiation" for the **believer's** sins in His death on the cross, Christ opened the door of available blessing in each believer's relationship with God in every circumstance, regardless of his history:
 - i. As the believer's "Propitiation," Christ in His death removed every cause for God to be angry at the believer based on any pre-salvation sin(s) he may have committed, 1 John 2:2 with 1 John 4:10.
 - ii. As the believer's "Propitiation," Christ in His death made possible continual victory in the believer's capacity to fellowship with God in the Christian life and beyond into eternity:
 - 1) Each believer on earth still has his pre-salvation sin nature, so he has sinned, 1 John 1:8, 10.
 - 2) Indeed, a believer can live a life of sin to the point where God punishes him by causing him to die a physically premature death, 1 John 5:16; 1 Corinthians 11:29-30.
 - 3) However, since Christ is the believer's "Propitiation," if a believer confesses his sin by prayer to God in Jesus' name (John 14:13-14), God is faithful and just based on Christ's work on the cross to forgive that believer and to cleanse him from all unrighteousness, 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2.
 - 4) God does not want believers to use confession as a charm to avoid His discipline so they can continue to live a life of sin, for He wants them **not** to sin. However, if they **do** sin, they have an Advocate with the Father in Christ, their "Propitiation" for sin, 1 John 2:1; Zechariah 3:1-7.
 - 5) Even if God punishes a believer with premature physical death because of his sin, Christ is his "Propitiation," so the Father takes that believer's soul to heaven, 1 Corinthians 3:13-15.
 - B. Thus, Christ as our "Propitiation" equips (1) the lost to be saved by faith apart from works and (2) believers who were saved through faith to stay saved and be able to fellowship with God by means of God's grace.

Lesson: (1) *God's wrath against all man's sins in history was so satiated by Christ's death, the lost need only trust in Christ apart from works to be saved.* (2) *The saved are (a) unconditionally free of God's eternal wrath, (b) free of any anger God might have had toward pre-salvation sins and (c) they will be forgiven for confessing any sin committed as believers. (d) Even if a believer dies in God's discipline, he goes to heaven by Christ's propitiation!*

Application: (1) *All efforts to appease God's wrath for pre-salvation sins are pointless, for Christ appeased God's wrath for that on the cross!* (2) *Thus, (a) lost men must simply trust in Christ to be saved and (b) believers must confess post-salvation sins to retain intimate spiritual fellowship with the Lord. (c) May we realize that even if a believer sins to the point that God disciplines him to die a pre-mature physical death, he still enters heaven due to the propitiation of Christ for him on the cross. (d) May we live righteous lives by depending on the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16), but IF we sin, may we be confident we can return to fellowship with God by applying 1 John 1:9.*