



**WORD CHALLENGE - PROPITIATION** - brings about a change in God's attitude, so that He moves from being at enmity with us to being for us. Propitiation has to do with God being appeased.

**EXPIATION.** The prefix ex means "out of" or "from," so expiation has to do with removing something or taking something away. In biblical terms, it has to do with taking away guilt through the payment of a penalty or the offering of an atonement.

**RECOMMENDED** For those wanting to look further at what PROPITIATION and EXPIATION is, read the following article found at: <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/two-important-words-good-friday-expiation-and-propitiation/>

Mark Dever points something out that is worthy of consideration. **"Ironically, sacrifices were most appropriate when the person offering the sacrifice realised that the offering was not sufficient to atone for sins. So you have David saying, Against thee, thee only have I sinned."**<sup>2</sup>

The sacrifices never removed sins, but they showed Israel at least three things:

1. That God was absolutely Holy
2. That sin is deadly serious
3. That reconciliation was possible by the innocent dying in place of the guilty.

This was God's way of preparing the world for the coming of Christ. There was no perfect sacrifice, if there was a perfect sacrifice the people could have stopped offering sacrifices, but they had to continually offer sacrifices, looking continually by faith to the promise that lay beneath the sacrifices, the promise of a saviour, salvation and restoration. All this would be fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

- **Heb Ch10:1** 'For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect (lit.make perfect those who draw near).'
- **Heb Ch10:4,** 'For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.'

# ANTRIM FPC CHURCH BIBLE CLASS

## THE OLD TESTAMENT - THE BIBLE JESUS USED

### Encountering God in The Old Testament

### 1st October 2017

#### **1. Encountering God in The Old Testament.**

It may sound strange to hear me say that the God of the Old Testament is the same God we meet in the New Testament. Yet many Christians who read their bible feel that the God represented in the New Testament is less cruel and 'draconian' (excessively harsh and severe) than the God of the Old Testament. Indeed many have argued that the O.T does not put God in a 'good light'. However, this is wrong conclusion based on a faulty misunderstanding of the O.T. We must always remember that God, the author of scripture has chosen to reveal Himself to us in the way He has through the canon of scripture. The Old Testament writings are important to Him as they reveal and reflect His character.

#### **2. God's passion for His own character.**

God is absolutely jealous of His name, and His character. He is passionate, He is aroused and zealous for His name to be magnified among the peoples of this world and in His creation. God's passion for His holy character is a major theme of the Old Testament, in fact it is the heartbeat of the scriptures, and the reason why the scriptures were given. God wants us to see who He is and worship Him.

So passionate is God for His own glory, that He created a world that would reflect His creative power **Psalm 19:1,** *'The heavens declare (tell) the glory of God; and the firmament (sky, expanse) sheweth (declares) his handywork.'* His delight is seen in His creation by announcing 'this is good'. God sets again to work at lifting up His glory by creating a man who bears His own imprint, His image, one who will bear His glory to all creation.

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Dever; Promises Made page. 57

When we come across God's wrath and anger in the O.T it is not the impulses of an angry tyrant that we see, but rather a holy and righteous God committed to His own character and opposed to man's sin.

Perhaps there is no passage in the bible that reveals God's passion for His glory and character than the words of **Isaiah 48:9-11**

*"For my name's sake will I defer my anger, and for [the sake of] my praise will I refrain [restrain it] for thee, that I cut thee not off. Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? And I will not give my glory unto another."*

We must stand in awe of this truth, we must allow it to saturate our heart and so remove any undue familiarity with the Holy God.

"The most passionate heart for the glorification of God is God's heart. God's ultimate goal is to uphold and display the glory of his name."<sup>1</sup>  
- John Piper

### **3. How do sinful men relate to a holy God?**

The answer to that question is simply, 'we cannot relate to Him!' We cannot come near to this God who is so passionate about Himself, who is justly aroused in anger when His name is dishonoured. With the bible revealing a God who is infinitely passionate about His holiness, this presents a massive problem for sinful men. How do humans relate to God? There is no sin in Him, therefore we cannot relate to Him, or have any relationship to Him for our sin separates Him from us.

#### **i. We can relate to God only by means of a divinely prepared way.**

This is another major theme that stands alongside the holiness of God in the O.T. We will mention it briefly now and then come to look at it a little later in our study. God is the one whom man has offended, in a deliberate,

planned rebellion which brought devastating consequences into the created world. It is not for us to try and make amends for our sin, we cannot. So devastating have the results of sin been that only God can initiate a way to restore the relationship that sin has broken. Man needs to be reconciled to God; any way of reconciliation must take into account man's sin but equally if not more so, God's holiness. That's why some people love the New Testament and misquote verses like 1 John 4:8, 'God is love.' They do not make the O.T the basis of the N.T. They think that God just simply forgives everyone, 'just forgets about sin', dismisses it as unimportant to Him.

The O.T presents us with a picture of a holy God who hates sin and is jealous of His character; of a separated, sinful people in need of reconciliation; and finally of a God who provides a way to restore peace between fallen man and Himself by means of an atonement.

#### **4. Atonement. - AT-ONE-MENT**

The Old Testament has chapter after chapter, passage after passage detailing gory sacrifices. Before someone says 'that's archaic, primitive and terrible!' let us remember the context of the Old Testament, this is God's way of restoring the lost relationship. The sacrifices and the offerings are not just simply God's chosen way, but the only way open to God to deal with man's sin and at the same time satisfy His justice and preserve His Holy character.

Throughout the O.T sinners are taught about atonement through the sacrifices. Note what is different about the sacrifices that other nations offered, and the sacrificial manner which God showed to Israel is this: Other nations chose to placate their gods through personal suffering, they would have sacrificed their children etc, hoping that their god would be pleased; they would sacrifice to manipulate their god, e.g. they would sacrifice to gain a good harvest etc. God however, is the one who approaches Israel and gives directions how His anger would be removed and their sins dealt with (**expiation and propitiation**).

**GOSPEL APPLICATION** - Jesus died to save us from the wrath of God, by His work on the cross He 'turned away' or 'propitiated' (brought about a change) the wrath of God that would have destroyed us.

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<sup>1</sup>Biblical Texts to Show God's Zeal for His Own Glory. John Piper