

WHO REQUIRED A SACRIFICE?

16 July 2003

A few months ago I received an email containing a children's story, allegedly told by Bill Cosby. In the story Adam and Eve take an "apple break", and God becomes "ticked", or angry with them. Is God angry because mankind sinned? Did He require the sacrifice of His only son as a substitute for those who repent of their sins? Did Jesus pay a penalty for those who break his law? Nearly all versions of our Bible teach the "angry God" concept. It is heard out of the mouths of just about everybody today - preachers, teachers and theologians. But is it true? I for one, no longer believe this lie. It is Pagan in origin! Yet, the vast majority of Bible experts will disagree with what I am about to share. So, all I ask is that you consider what I say, and seek the Lord to impress your heart as to whether or not it is true.

From Webster's Dictionary look at the meanings of two primary English words used in various Bibles:
Propitiate: From Latin, means to **appease** and make favorable. Propitiation, then, is the **act of appeasing**.
Expiate: 1) Obsolete: to put an end to; 2a) to atone for; b) **to pay the penalty for**; c) to make amends for.

Propitiation is used three times in the King James. Two of the four forms of the Greek are used. Here are all the forms and where they are located: hilasterion²⁴³⁵ - neuter noun - Rom 3:25; Heb 9:5; hilasmos²⁴³⁴ - masculine noun - 1 Jn 2:2 & 4:10; hilaskomai²⁴³³ - verb - Lk 18:13; Heb 2:17; hileos²⁴³⁶ - adjective - Mt 16:22; Heb 8:12. (Note: Although there are four different Strong's numbers, the words are derived the same). These words carry the same basic meaning of mercy, good, kind, reconciliation. Notice: "be merciful" in Lk 18:13; "make reconciliation" in Heb 2:17; "merciful" in Heb 8:12; "mercy seat" in Heb 9:5. Yet, the translators, when referring to the sacrifice of Christ, used an English word that means "act of appeasing" instead of the correct Greek meaning of "act of mercy". Why? Because that is the how they understood God.

It appears that New Testament use of these words regarding Christ's sacrifice comes from how the sacrificial system is understood. Those concepts were then applied to the Hebrew. The explanations in Bromiley's TDNT rely heavily on the Septuagint (also LXX), a third century translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek. Bromiley, endeavoring to explain the Hebrew word "kpr" (Strong's # 3722), made this statement on page 362 of his abridged one volume of his works: *The meaning of the root kpr: The etymology (i.e. historical use) is obscure. Gen 32:21 favors the basic sense "to cover", though "to wash away" and "to propitiate" are possible.* Yet, rather than go with an obvious Biblical use, he chose a possible, or incorrect meaning derived from the Greek word used for "mercy seat" in the LXX, but rendered "propitiatory".

The Septuagint uses hilasterion²⁴³⁵ (as in Heb 9:5) for "mercy seat", but translated it as "propitiatory". In Hebrew, the ark of the covenant was covered with a kapporeth³⁷²⁷, translated "mercy seat" (Ex 25:17). The word comes from kaphar³⁷²², which means "to cover", rendered "atonement" 71 of 102 appearances. Therefore kapporeth literally would be "covering". I believe the concept of covering comes from God's example of what He did in type to Adam and Eve right after they sinned. **Gen 3:21: Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.** The symbol fits the sacrifice and covering of Christ's faith - i.e. His understanding.

The Hebrew sanctuary and services, which Moses built, is a parable of the procedure Jesus Christ went through to put to death the sin nature. It is the same process by which we will be completed in our spiritual understanding. It is too lengthy in one study to give proof of the symbols. So, I will just share what I understand. The ark is the heart of a person who accepts Christ; Aaron's rod that budded is the authority

you give the Son of God to correct you; the gold jar of manna is Christ's understanding of the written word (law). The stone tables are God's covenant (Deut 4:13) which can only be entered by listening (Isa 55:3). The mercy seat was a solid gold covering for the ark of the covenant, but not a part of it (Ex 31:7). It represents the faith of Christ by which we are saved (cf 1 Pet 1:7; Gal 2:16 - KJV). The faith of Christ is his understanding gained by his experiences as son of God and son of man. **Heb 5: 8.** *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him...*

How did the covering of the ark come to be called "mercy seat"? It comes from the Greek words used in the N.T. The true concept presented is that of a covering as an act of mercy by the Father through the Son. Now, go back and apply what we know to the N.T. **Heb 9:5:** *And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the [cover (of the ark) ²⁴³⁵]*... Notice the only other use of the same word in **Rom 3:25:** *Whom [the] God hath set forth to be a [covering ²⁴³⁵] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the [passing over ³⁹²⁹] of sins that are past, [in] the forbearance of God...* [Greek]. When the correct words are used, this concept can be understood as two allegories presented to illustrate a spiritual lesson from Passover and the Ark of the Covenant. When one receives the understanding (blood on doorpost of the heart) that the Son of God shed His blood for us (Passover), *...he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new...* (2 Cor 5:17). It is an act of mercy out of love when God forgives our past sins, and delivers us from future sins.

1 John 2:2: *And he is the [act of mercy, or covering] ²⁴³⁴ for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. 1 Jn 4:10:* *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the [act of mercy, or covering] ²⁴³⁴ for our sins. (Hilasmus ²⁴³⁴ is the masculine form derived from the same root word as the neuter noun hilasterion ²⁴³⁵ in Rom 3:25). Can you see that God sent His only Son, not because the law demanded it, but because of His infinite mercy? It was the ultimate act of love!*

Jn 3:16-17: *16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

Conclusion: (Out of all the Bible versions I checked, Weymouth's translated accurately seven of the eight verses using hilasterion, or its derivatives). The death of the Son of God was the climax of an act of love by a merciful God, and not something demanded by a law as man understands it, nor was the death of the son to appease an angry God. WE required the death of the son in order to see the love of God. And God does not condemn us because we are sinners. **Rom 8: 1.** *There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not [according to] the flesh, but [according to] the Spirit. The mind of Christ we are to grasp (Phil 2:5) is the knowledge he possesses of the character of the Father. They which refuse to accept the way out of sin are condemned: Jn 3: 19. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

Eph 2: 4 *But [the] God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath [made alive] us together with Christ, (by grace (divine influence) ye are [being] saved;) 6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in [the heavens] in Christ Jesus: Note: Being in the heavens is figurative of being in God's understanding. May God richly bless you with His understanding. AMEN!*