

# PROPTIATION

1 John 4:9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the **propitiation** for our sins.

How do we really know that God is a God of love? Ultimately, you see the fullest, greatest expression of God's love in the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

The apostle John says that the sending of Jesus into the world, that we might live through Him, is the great manifestation to mankind of the love of God.

He dissects it further. He reminds us that God took all the initiative in loving us and sending His Son. Then he says something we don't immediately understand. God did all this in order that Jesus would be **the propitiation for our sins**.

- being changed to bring change -

It's not a word we use on a daily basis! It's a word we need to know, however, because John is telling us we don't know anything about God's love until we do.

Technically, it is the means by which it becomes consistent with God's character to pardon and bless mankind. The propitiation does not procure His love or make Him loving; it only renders it consistent for Him to exercise his love towards mankind.

If God is love, why does He have to do something before He can exercise His love towards us? What makes it inconsistent for God to simply love us as we are?

God is not only a God of love. He is also holy. Infinitely holy. God, because He is holy, must punish sin. He cannot simply ignore it; or overlook it. It must be punished.

**You** are a sinner. He cannot simply ignore it; or overlook it. God must therefore punish you for your sin.

A theme running through the entire Bible is that of God's wrath punishing sin. It is summarized in Romans 1:18, **For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men.**

**The wrath of God** is not irrational rage or anger. It is His in-character response to sin. It is the proper response of a holy God to evil. God could not be holy and not express wrath toward evil.

**Is revealed** means it is being *constantly revealed*. It doesn't mean that every tragedy or disaster is an exercise of God's wrath against mankind. It means that men are presently aware of God's wrath. Or they should be, because they have seen it illustrated in the past:

1. In the days of Noah, He destroyed all mankind in the global Flood, with the exception of eight people (Genesis 6-7).
2. In the days of Abraham, God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18-19).

The words, **from heaven** remind us that God is sovereign. This is His earth, His universe; it is run by the principles and

laws He established. His love and His holiness must be reconciled His way – not ours.

His wrath is **against all ungodliness and wickedness of men**. It is universal – against all mankind in their **wickedness**. All fall short; all are therefore the subjects of His wrath.

You see the problem. God is love; but He is also holy. He must therefore punish sin, and that means punishing sinners by exercising His wrath against them.

Here's the Good News: If you are a Christian, you will not be punished for your sin. *Not ever!* You may have to live with its earthly consequences; but you will not be punished for it by having the wrath of God poured-out upon you.

How is that possible?

It's possible because when Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself on the Cross, He took your place as your substitute. In taking your place, Jesus received upon Himself the punishment your sins deserved. **The wrath of God was poured-out on Him instead of on you.**

Theologians use two words to describe what happened when the wrath of God was poured out upon Jesus: *Expiation* and *propitiation*.

1. **Expiation** is a man-ward view of the Cross. Because Jesus took my place and bore my punishment, I am forgiven from sin and forever cleansed from its corruption.
2. **Propitiation** is the God-ward view of the Cross. Because Jesus took my place and bore my punishment, the sin-hating God is forever satisfied. By

offering Himself as a sacrifice, by substituting Himself for me, by actually bearing the punishment which should have been mine and ours, Jesus satisfied the Father and effected a reconciliation with God for mankind.

In ancient pagan religions there is an idea of appeasing the 'gods' by various gifts or sacrifices. But in the Bible, propitiation always refers to something God does, not man. Man cannot do anything to appease God – except spend eternity in Hell.

The only propitiation that could be acceptable to God had to be made by God Himself. The Father is described in Scripture as sending the Son. The love which prompted the Father to send His Son was always there, an attribute of His. While the Father's holiness required that there be propitiation for sin, His love provided it. He could not overlook sin and still be God; but He was willing to send His own Son in order to satisfy His wrath against sin.

By requiring punishment for sin, God demonstrates how infinite is His holiness. By providing His Son to bear the punishment, He manifested infinite love.

"God does not love us because Christ died for us. Christ died for us because God loves us" (John Stott).

The death of Christ for the sin of the world changed the whole position of mankind in its relation to God, for He recognizes what Christ did in behalf of the world:

[1John 2:2](#) And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Christ's death on the Cross is sufficient to save the entire human race. Is the whole world saved? No. But Jesus has born upon Himself the wrath of every human being. All those who trust Him as Savior will be saved from the wrath of God.

It is in the context of the dilemma between God's infinite holiness and His immeasurable love that I fully understand His love for me.

What about those who do not receive the Lord? I think it's important that we renew our understanding of the wrath of God against sin. We already saw that it is being revealed. By far, the greatest expression of God's wrath is just around the prophetic corner. In Revelation 6:17 we are told,

Revelation 6:17 For the great day of His **wrath** has come, and who is able to stand?"

Revelation chapters six through nineteen present the wrath of God as it is poured-out on Christ rejecting men, women, and children. It's the period of time we call the Great Tribulation.

How close are we to the Great Tribulation?

1. *WorldNetDaily* reports that a new Jewish Sanhedrin is in place and has called for plans to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. The new Sanhedrin was reestablished last October in Tiberias, the place of its last meeting 1,600 years ago. Since then, it has met in Jerusalem on a monthly basis. Not all Jews recognize them as official; but it is interesting to see such a development.
2. Have you heard of Javier Solana? In 1999, Javier Solana was appointed the High Representative for

Europe's Common, Foreign and Security Policy. His position is linked in two places with the number 666 in official EU documents. The first document is their General Report for 1998, Chapter Five, Section One, *Article 666*, which called for the immediate election of a High Representative for the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy who would have a "strong political profile," and be backed by "credible operational capabilities." Quote: "666. In December the Vienna European Council expressed the opinion that the Secretary-General of the Council and High Representative for the CFSP should be appointed as soon as possible and be a personality with a strong political profile. It invited the Council to prepare common strategies on Russia, Ukraine, the Mediterranean region and the western Balkans, on the understanding that the first would be on Russia. Welcoming the new impetus given to the debate on a common European policy on security and defense, the European Council also noted that the CFSP should be backed by credible operational capabilities."<sup>1</sup> The second document, called *Recommendation 666*, which was drafted by Javier Solana himself in 2000, called for special powers to be given to the High Representative, enabling him to take control of European political and military councils in the event of an emergency. Quote: "12) Support proposals for the WEU Secretary-General and CFSP High Representative to preside over the PSC (Political and Security Committee) and civilian crisis-management machinery and give him powers to convene the Council of the European Union in the event of an emergency."<sup>2</sup> (I'm not saying he is the antichrist; to be fair, these documents are lengthy and,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://europa.eu/generalreport/en/1998/x0666.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.evenmore.co.uk/prophecy/antichrist.html>

- unless you're going to skip numbers, all will have an 'Article 666.' It's just interesting that two of the 666 references are about Solana).
3. Euro currency is keeping up with end-times prophecy. I've seen pictures of coins that feature the goddess Europa riding on the back of a bull. Interesting in light of the apostle John's description of the last world empire in Revelation 17:3-6, where he says, [and I saw a woman sit upon a... beast.](#)
  4. *Applied Digital Solutions* in the USA markets the *VeriChip*, a microchip about the size of a grain of rice, which can be implanted under the skin. It can store 128 characters of information (about a paragraph). Ideally this would be used to store a unique number, which could reference a database on computer containing an individual's medical history, financial assets, personal details, biometric data, etc. This chip could have a wide range of applications, from security clearance and identification, secure financial transactions, retrieving essential data for medical emergencies, and the list goes on. Also, because the chip's radio emission can be tracked by satellite, it also could be used to locate a person anywhere in the world. GPS circuits are now being manufactured small enough to fit inside wrist watches, and the next generation of implantable chips may also utilize this technology. This sounds eerily similar to the technology described 2000 years ago in Revelation thirteen, about a mark we would each have on the forehead or wrist, by which we must buy and sell.

## Conclusion

God's wrath has been revealed; the great day of His wrath is near. If you are a believer, Jesus has satisfied the wrath of God as the [propitiation](#) for your sins.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 ... wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.









