



ETYMOLOGY OF BIBLICAL WORDS SERIES

“ATONEMENT” Study Supplement: Associated Word

PROPITIATION

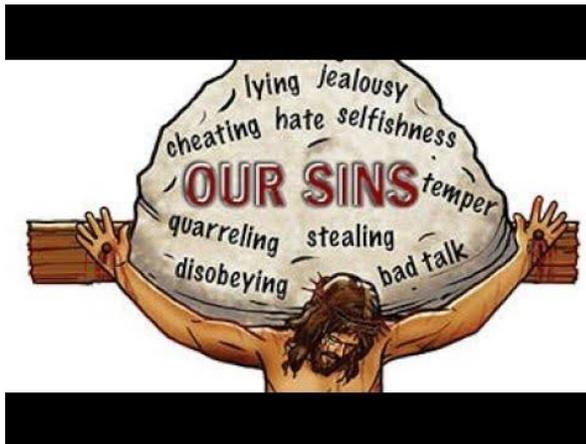
Meaning. That by which God is rendered propitious, i.e., by which it becomes consistent with his character and government to pardon and bless the sinner. The propitiation does not procure his love or make him loving; it only renders it consistent for him to exercise his love towards sinners.*

Origin. Late 14c., from Late Latin propitiatio(nem) (nominative propitiatio) "an atonement," noun of action from past participle stem of Latin propitiare "appease, propitiate," from propitius "favorable, gracious, kind, well-disposed," from pro- "forward" (see pro-) + stem related to petere "to make for, go to; seek, strive after; ask for, beg, beseech, request" (from PIE root *pet- "to rush, to fly").¹

Religious context. The sense in Latin is perhaps because the word originally was religious, literally "a falling or rushing toward," hence, "eager," and, of the gods, "well-disposed." Earliest recorded form of the word in English is propitiatorium "the mercy seat, place of atonement" (c. 1200), translating Greek hilasterion.¹

In Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:5 (A.V., "mercy-seat"), the Greek word hilasterion is used. It is the word employed by the **LXX** translators in Exodus 25:17 and elsewhere as the equivalent for the Hebrew

kapporeth, which means "covering," and is used of the lid of the ark of the covenant (Exodus 25:21; 30:6). This Greek word (hilasterion) came to denote not only the mercy-seat or lid of the ark, but also propitiation or reconciliation by blood. On the great day of atonement, the high priest carried the blood of the sacrifice he offered for all the people within the veil and sprinkled with it the "mercy-seat," and so made propitiation.*



In 1 John 2:2; 4:10, Christ is called the "propitiation for our sins." Here a different Greek word is used (hilasmos).*

Christ is "the propitiation," because, by his becoming our substitute and assuming our obligations, he expiated (atoned) our guilt, covered it, by the vicarious punishment which he endured.* "And he is the kapporah for chattoteinu, not for ours only, but also for the kol HaOlam Haze." [VAYIKRA 5:15; YESHAYAH 53:10] (1 John 2:2, OJB)

LXX is the abbreviated form of "Septuagint:" (From the Latin: septuāgintā literally "seventy;" sometimes called the Greek Old Testament). LXX is the earliest extant Greek translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew. The Septuagint was presumably made for the Jewish community in Egypt when Greek was the common language throughout the region.

* <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/propitiation/>

¹<https://www.etymonline.com/word/propitiation>