

Romans 3:21-25—From Judgement To Justification, Redemption, And Propitiation

Memory Verse:

Romans 12:1-2 NKJV

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Introduction

In chapters 1 and 2 of Romans, Paul has gone to great lengths to show that all men are guilty before God because they have all broken His moral law, being convicted by creation, conscience, and/or the law. Then in Romans 3:9-20, Paul gave the underlying reason—all men are born with a completely corrupted human nature; this is the doctrine of total depravity. Paul puts it bluntly in Romans 7:18-19 (NLT), *“And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t. ¹⁹ I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.”*

Paul then brings it all to a head in Romans 3:20 when he comes to the awful and sobering conclusion, *“For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are”* (NLT). Simply put, mankind cannot save himself from the penalty of sin, which is eternity in Hell. No matter how hard any of us try, we can never be good enough or do enough to earn our salvation—we can never meet God’s standard of good, which is perfection. Remember, only perfect people can live in the presence of the perfect God in His perfect Heaven.

To understand just how hopeless our situation is consider the following:

1. Because of our total depravity, it is impossible for an unregenerate or unsaved person to do anything that pleases God—although the action will appear to be good on the surface, the hidden motive will always be selfish because all are born with a sinful human nature that is inherently selfish
2. Because of our total depravity, there is absolutely no moral goodness to be found in all of humanity—no one is worthy or deserving of being saved
3. Because of our total depravity, when anyone stands before God, they will be guilty of breaking His perfect moral law
4. Because of our total depravity, no-one can save themselves from the penalty of sin, which is death, both physical and spiritual (eternal separation from God in the Lake of Fire or Hell)

However, just when we think there is no hope at all for mankind, Paul says “But”, and then goes on to show how God made it possible for all men to be saved: of His own will, by His own power, and at great cost to Himself. Let’s learn about the good news!

Outline

1. From Judgement to Justification (3:21-22)
2. Man’s universal problem—all have sinned (3:23)
3. God’s universal solution—justification, redemption, propitiation (3:24-25)

Romans 3:21-31 NKJV

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, ²² even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, ²⁶ to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

²⁷ Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸ Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. ²⁹ Or is He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, ³⁰ since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. ³¹ Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

1. From judgement to justification

Romans 3:21-22a NKJV

But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.

v 21 **But now:** Here is the turning point in the book of Romans. By faith in Christ, by responding to the Holy Spirit's universal conviction of sin (see John 16:8-11), everyone has the choice to move from despair to hope, from being a slave to sin to freedom from sin, from death to eternal life, from having a criminal record and being declared guilty to being declared as having "the righteousness of God". The deserved judgement of mankind's sin is contrasted with the glorious news that God has made a way of salvation possible for all men, which has absolutely nothing to do with man. Justification by faith means that God has freely provided guilty sinners a way of escape from the penalty of sin—the guilty can go free.

v 21 **But now:** God is doing something new. The old covenant which can only condemn, is being replaced with the New Covenant that freely justifies anyone who chooses to believe, anyone who is willing to humble themselves and respond to God's invitation.

v 21 **Being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets:** The New covenant is not a new idea. The Old Testament clearly predicted that there would come a day when God would relate with mankind in a new way—by grace (e.g. Isaiah 53, Ezekiel 36:25-32).

The Old Covenant is a promise made by God that *if* a man kept all the requirements of the law 100% of the time, that is, *if* he was perfect in everything he thought, said, and did, from the time he was born to the time he died, only then God would consider him righteous or perfect. However, even just one sin would mean that he would be guilty of breaking God's law and would necessarily be sentenced to eternity in Hell.

In contrast the New covenant is where God, through Christ Jesus, takes away our sin and gives us His own righteousness in its place—all we have to do is repent and believe (with a living or genuine faith that demonstrates true repentance—see James 2:14-26). Paul in his letter to the Galatians makes this very clear.

Galatians 3:10-12 NLT

But those who depend on the law [self-effort or trying hard to be good] to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, “**Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God’s Book of the Law.**” ¹¹ So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, “**It is through faith that a righteous person has life.**” ¹² This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, “It is through obeying the law that a person has life.”

v 21 **Apart from the law:** This does not mean that God has lowered His standards and will now allow sinful man to be in His presence. It will always be true that God will only allow perfect people into His presence—God can’t and doesn’t change.

v 21-22 **Apart from the law... through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe:** The law is all about me trying to be good enough to please God. So in contrast, the way of faith means that we first humble ourselves and come to the understanding that it’s impossible for anyone to ever be good enough to earn, deserve, or merit eternal life. So instead of trying to *earn* salvation by law or works, we can *receive* salvation by grace through faith.

v 21 **Apart from the law:** “God’s righteousness is not offered to us as something to take up the slack between our ability to keep the law and God’s perfect standard. It is not given to *supplement* our own righteousness, it is given completely **apart** from our own attempted righteousness.” (David Guzik)

“Justification is apart from the law. If you’re trying to relate to the Father on the basis of your own goodness or devotion, your consistency or your Bible study, your do’s and don’ts—you’ll never be justified. The law cannot justify you. It can only bring you to the realisation that you are a sinner in need of a Saviour.” (Jon Courson)

v 22 **To all and on all who believe:** The new way to approach God is open to everybody. Because there is no minimum standard of goodness or righteousness we must meet to qualify, everybody is invited, from the nicest person to the most vile sinner. The only condition or requirement is to believe, to trust or have faith in God’s promise that “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

v 22 **Through faith:** Notice that it doesn’t say, “by faith”. **Through faith** “points to the fact that faith is not a merit, earning salvation. It is no more than the means *through* which the gift is given.” (Morris) The point here is that, with reference to saving faith, the amount of faith doesn’t matter, only that we exercise the faith that we do have, to choose to believe God’s promises to be true for ourselves.

A warning: James 2:14-26 describes a person who intellectually understands, but displays no true repentance or heart change, as having a “dead faith”. A person can intellectually know this to be true but not apply it to themselves—they want to continue living their life independently of God—they are not willing to first repent and make God the most important part of their life (Story of the guy who was finally convinced that Jesus really did rise from the dead, but didn’t care). Knowing something to be true doesn’t mean that you have put your trust in it. It’s like knowing that a parachute will save your life when you jump out of the plane, but choosing not to put it on.

2. Man’s universal problem—all have sinned

Romans 3:22b-23 NKJV

For there is no difference; ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The glory of God here refers to God’s perfect standard of holiness, His moral purity and absolute goodness. None of us come close to who God is. This should cause us to cease from comparing ourselves to others. An example is that some of us might be standing on mount Everest, and some of us standing on the beach. However, we are all still a very, very, very long way from being able to touch the sun; none of us would be foolish enough to boast that “I’m closer to touching the sun than you are”, because we all know that it’s far beyond anybody’s reach. In the same way, when we begin to understand God’s absolute purity and holiness, then we see that the differences between each other are really nothing—none of us should be thinking that we can achieve being as righteous as the Son by our own effort. God is holy, we are not. The good news is that God Himself bridges the massive righteousness gap between Himself and us.

3. God’s universal solution—Justification, Redemption, Propitiation

Romans 3:24-25a NKJV

Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood,

v 24-25 **Justified... redemption... propitiation:** Paul uses three themes or concepts to explain salvation.

- **Justification** means to be declared innocent or not guilty in a court of law—it solves man’s problem of being guilty before a righteous judge who must condemn them
- **Redemption** refers to a slave being set free from their old master—it solves man’s problem of being a slave to sin, the world, and the devil
- **Propitiation** refers to appeasing God through sacrifice—it solves man’s problem of offending our Creator

Justification

v 24 **Justified freely:** Ephesians 2:8-9 teaches us that salvation is a gift, meaning that it is something that can only be **freely** received—it cannot be earned. It’s obvious that if I receive something (e.g. wages) because I paid for or worked for it, then it’s *not* a gift—it’s actually something that I am owed. However, it’s also obvious that if I receive something without working or paying for it (e.g. Christmas present), then it *is* a gift—something that I **freely** received (without any cost to me).

v 24 **By His grace:** God's motive or reason for making justification or forgiveness freely available to all of mankind is **grace**. This is important because it shows that all the reasons for giving the gift are in the giver, and not the recipient. *God saves us only because it's something that He wants to do, because He is behaving according to His own nature. It has nothing to do with us. The sole reason that God chooses to save us is because He is a loving and gracious God.*

Justification means to be declared innocent or not guilty in a court of law. But when God justifies us, He goes even further. When God justifies us, it's "just-if-I'd never sinned." Again, 1 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV), "*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*" When God justifies us, He actually credits us with His own righteousness, His own perfection, His own holiness. So it's not just that I'm not guilty just because my fine has been paid, but even more than that, God sees the justified sinner as having not sinned at all—there is not even a record of my sins. Why? Because Jesus became sin. Just like God's perfect righteousness is transferred or imputed or credited to those who believe, so all our sin was transferred or imputed or credited to Jesus. When the Father saw Jesus hanging on the cross, He saw Him as being guilty of committing all the sins of all mankind—mankind's criminal record was transferred to Jesus. Now when God looks at the believer, He sees them as being as perfect and holy as Himself, because we are *in Christ*, we have received or have been credited with *the righteousness of God*.

Isaiah 43:25 NKJV

"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.

v 24 **Being justified:** "Justification is by grace exclusively. What is grace? It is unmerited, undeserved, unearned favour. The riches of God climax in justification. And if that isn't enough, the phrase "**being justified**" is in the aorist tense, which means it is an action that happens continually. Justification didn't only take place the day we were saved or baptised, for even this very moment we are being justified and declared righteous. So often we feel that, because of our sin, we've forfeited the access and the freedom we once had with God. Not true. Justification is a continual action, a continual declaration of righteousness." (Jon Courson)

"Being in such a sinful state, the only way we can be **justified** is to be **justified freely**. We can't purchase it with good works at all. If it isn't made free to us, we can't have it at all. So we are **justified freely by His grace**—His unmerited favour, given to us without regard to what we deserve. It is a giving motivated purely by the giver, and motivated by nothing in the one who receives." (David Guzik)

v 24 **Freely:** "**Freely** is the ancient Greek word *dorean*. The way this word is used in other New Testament passages helps us understand the word. Matthew 10:8 (*Freely you have received, freely give*) and Revelation 22:17 (*And whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely*) show that the word means truly *free*, not just "cheap" or "discounted." Perhaps the most striking use of the ancient Greek word *dorean* is in John 15:25: *They hated me without a cause (dorean)*. Even as there was *nothing* in Jesus deserving of man's hatred, so there is *nothing* in us deserving of justification—all the reasons are in God." (David Guzik)

“In John 15:25, the Greek word here translated “**freely**” is translated “without a cause.” That’s how it should have been translated here as well: “being justified without a cause.” (Jon Courson)

To summarise, God **justifies** us **freely**, or without a cause; that is, there is no good reason or cause in us as to why God would save any of us.

Redemption

v 24 **Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:** Now we learn that our justification is only possible because Jesus Christ redeemed us—**being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**. This brings home the fact that, without Jesus paying the ultimate price to redeem us, God could *not* justify or forgive us: There is no forgiveness or giving us His righteousness without the shedding of blood (see Hebrews 9:27). Don’t ever take God’s gift of eternal life for granted.

What is redemption?

v 24 **Redemption:** Simply put, to redeem means to buy back something, which involves cost. The good news is that Jesus’ death on the cross was the required and total payment for the sins of all mankind (see 1 John 2:2)—it was the payment or ransom required to purchase the freedom of all mankind, thus providing the opportunity for all men to be free from being slaves to sin, satan, and the world.

This is why God can say that He **freely** justifies us: it doesn’t mean that our salvation was free and easy, but rather it means that our salvation didn’t cost *us* anything—however it cost God everything, His very life. Again, salvation is free to us, but very costly for God. As someone said, “our salvation is free, but not cheap.”

The history of the Greek word translated redemption

Redemption originally described the payment or “ransom” that was made to free prisoners of war. It’s meaning was eventually extended to include the freeing of slaves by the payment of a price or “ransom”.

Application: Because Jesus bought us, He owns us; we belong to Him. “*For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s*” (1 Corinthians 6:20 NKJV).

The three different Greek words translated as “redeem”

There are three different Greek words used that are all translated “redeem” or “redemption”.

1. **Agorazo:** This word referred to when a slave was bought or redeemed or ransomed in the slave market, but only to be used and sold again once he wasn’t needed. Thankfully, this is not the Greek word used in Romans 3:24.
2. **Exagorazo:** This word referred to when a slave was bought or redeemed or ransomed from the slave market, but never to be sold again; the slave would remain the permanent possession of his new owner. Again, this is not the Greek word used in Romans 3:24. How can we improve on this?

3. *Apolutrosis*: This word referred to a slave being purchased or redeemed or ransomed from the slave market with the purpose of being set free, never again to be a slave. This is what Jesus did for us. He purchased our freedom to permanently remove us from the slave market of sin. *Apolutrosis* is the Greek word translated as “redemption” in Romans 3:24—**Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus** sinners can be permanently delivered, released or set free from the slave market of sin.

“I love it! Yes, for us redemption is *agorazo*—for we have been purchased by the Lord. Yes, it’s *exagorazo*—for we’ll never be sold again. But even more than that it’s *apolutrosis*—for we were purchased for the purpose of being set free. “I no longer call you servants, but friends,” Jesus said (see John 15:15).” (Jon Courson)

Application: Because God redeemed (*apolutrosis*) us, we are invited, but not forced, to join God in His work

But you say, aren’t we slaves to righteousness? Yes, in a manner of speaking we are (See Romans 6:18-19). However, the believers new relationship with God is vastly different to how they previously related to Satan as their master. Satan is a cruel master, a tyrant, who keeps those under his rule oppressed and afflicted. There is no choice, no love. In contrast, God is a kind, patient and generous master; He does not demand anything from us—*instead His desire is that we respond to His invitation to follow and obey Him only because we love Him*. God wants us to work with Him, not for Him. Jesus clearly describes this in:

John 15:9-15 NLT

“I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! ¹² This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves [servants], because a master doesn’t confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.

Yes, we are servants of the Most High God, but we relate to Him as friends. God doesn’t treat us like satan does, as worthless and disposable pawns whom he uses exclusively for his own benefit. No, God desires the best for us, and His desire is to bless us. *We experience that blessing when we are motivated by love and gratitude to willingly choose to join God in His work.*

2 Corinthians 5:20-6:1 NKJV

Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

6:1 **We then, as workers together with Him** also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

The context of the phrase **“as workers together with Him”** is that of being an ambassador for Christ (5:20). An ambassador is not a slave, but rather a high ranking official who represents his king. An ambassador both works with and for his master. “An ambassador can rightly be described as working together with his king. Yet, the ambassador himself has no power or authority or agenda on his own—it is all bound up in his king. The king *delegates* power and authority to the ambassador and reveals his agenda to the ambassador, and then the king expects the ambassador to fulfill that agenda.” (David Guzik)

As workers together with Him!: This is an amazing privilege that we have. God could do things much more efficiently if He didn't involve us inefficient and often reluctant workers. However, there is great blessing in partnering with God in His work. One thing that we must remember is this: *God wants us to join Him in His work for our benefit and good, not His.* I remember the first time I helped my daughters mow the lawn. They would stand in front of me and hold on to the handle. They weren't strong enough to actually push the mower, they didn't have the skill to keep the mower straight, nor the knowledge of how short or long to cut the grass. In fact, it took twice as long to mow the lawn with them when compared to me doing the job myself. So why did I ask the girls to help? Not for my benefit, but for theirs, so they could grow and learn, and also for the sheer enjoyment of doing things together with them—they felt good and I felt good because we were working together—this is what it is like when we choose to love God and willingly submit our will to His and join Him in His work. Jesus invites us to take His yoke upon us which is easy and light, so we will find rest for our souls (see Matthew 11:29-30).

Propitiation—How the death of Jesus satisfies the righteous judgment of God

We have learned about **justification**, **redemption**, and now we will learn about **propitiation**. This is a rich word that is full of meaning. We need to understand the concept of propitiation if we are to fully understand the gospel. There are several aspects to consider and understand:

1. Propitiation means to buy off the anger of the god

v 25 **Propitiation**: “The word in its classical form was used of the act of appeasing the Greek gods by a sacrifice ... in other words, the sacrifice was offered to buy off the anger of the god.” (Wuest)

The Bible says that God is angry with sin and therefore the sinner—**God is a just judge, and God is angry with the wicked every day** (Psalm 7:11 NKJV). Sin is abhorrent to God. God hates sin. Sin makes God angry. Let's try to understand why. Here's a story from Jon Courson:

“A doctor was on trial because, although he attempted to abort an eight-and-a-half-month-old baby, the baby survived but lost her arm in the process. Yet, as one journalist pointed out, this is controversial only because the abortion didn't work. Had the doctor been successful, the story never would have surfaced.”

God's heart is infinitely more tender and loving than ours, thus sin is so much more offensive to Him. God sees all the domestic violence, all the sexual physical and emotional abuse, millions starving and suffering because of the selfish decisions of greedy and power hungry men, millions of unborn babies slaughtered in the name of pleasure and convenience, all the sexual perversion that sinful men enjoy, and all the selfish thoughts decisions we make that make life miserable for those around us. Think about it—if you were God, and you saw all the sin in the world, wouldn't you be incensed, furious, indignant, outraged, infuriated, disgusted, horrified... obviously yes. That's why it's a scary thing to be under the wrath of God.

John 3:36

He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and **he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.**”

Ephesians 5:5-6 NLT

You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world. ⁶ Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, **for the anger [wrath] of God will fall on all who disobey him.**

Here is where propitiation comes in. God took His righteous anger towards sin, the wrath that He feels, and poured it out on His own Son, who gave His life as a ransom to redeem us and free us from the slave market of sin forever. Jesus absorbed the wrath of God while He was hanging on the cross—this is what made the suffering on the cross so incredibly painful for Jesus. The physical pain was bad enough, but having the fury of God poured out or taken out on Him was far worse.

The good news is that once a person repents and believes, they are no longer under God's wrath, God is no longer angry with them, because God poured out His anger on Himself.

2. Propitiation means a substitute sacrifice

Let's have a look at the other New Testament Scriptures where the word propitiation (Greek: *hilasterion*) is used:

Hebrews 2:17 NKJV

Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make **propitiation** for the sins of the people.

1 John 2:1-2 AMP

My little children, I write you these things so that you may not violate God's law *and* sin. But if anyone should sin, we have an Advocate (One Who will intercede for us) with the Father—[it is] Jesus Christ [the all] righteous [upright, just, Who conforms to the Father's will in every purpose, thought, and action].

2 And He [that same Jesus Himself] is the **propitiation** (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins, and not for ours alone but also for [the sins of] the whole world.

1 John 4:10 AMP

In this is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the **propitiation** (the atoning sacrifice) for our sins.

v 25 **Whom God [the Father] set forth as a propitiation:** Simply put, Jesus is the **propitiation**, or the atoning and substitute sacrifice for the sins of all people. The Father willingly sent the innocent Jesus to be punished in the place of guilty mankind. Jesus was our **propitiation** or substitute sacrifice. Since we couldn't pay our fine, God paid it for us, on our behalf.

The only way that the Father could legally let us go free is if someone else paid the penalty of our sin. God can't just let sin slide, He can't just let us off the hook. If God didn't punish all sin, He would no longer be a good, righteous, and just judge. So the Father sent Jesus to be the substitute sacrifice for our sins—He suffered our punishment so that we could go free.

3. The picture of the mercy seat—a visual aid to help us understand substitutionary atonement

The mercy seat was the lid that covered the ark of the covenant, the wooden box covered with gold that was placed in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and the temple. God's presence, His shekinah glory, resided above the mercy seat. Inside the ark of the covenant were three reminders of Israel's sin and rebellion against God:

- The two tablets that God wrote the 10 commandments on—this reminded the people that they had broken God's law
- Aarons rod that budded—reminding the people that they had rejected God's leadership
- The pot containing manna—reminding the people that they were ungrateful of God's provision (see Hebrews 9:3-5)

It's very interesting that the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures, used the same Greek word *hilasterion* when translating the Hebrew words for "mercy seat". This is continued in the New Testament in Hebrews 9:5—"*and above [the ark] were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat [*hilasterion = propitiation*]."* Why would they do this? Because once a year, on Yom Kippur, also known as "the Day of Atonement", the high priest would go into the Holy of holies and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat, the solid gold lid that separated the presence of God from the contents of the ark that reminded the people of their sin (see Leviticus 16).

The Jews clearly understood the concept of a substitutionary sacrifice. They knew that as long as the blood of the innocent animal was on the mercy seat, then the sins of the people would not be punished. They knew that the only thing that separated and saved them from the wrath of God, was the blood of the innocent animal—a picture of the coming Saviour who would literally die (be punished) in the place of all people.

The picture is completed when Jesus goes into the real or heavenly holy of holies and sprinkles His own blood on the mercy seat there. On earth, the priests had to go in year after year, but Jesus only had to die once, and apply His blood once to the heavenly mercy seat. (also see Hebrews 9:23-26 and Hebrews 6:19-20)

Hebrews 9:11-15 NLT

So Christ has now become the High Priest over all the good things that have come. He has entered that greater, more perfect Tabernacle in heaven, which was not made by human hands and is not part of this created world. ¹² With his own blood—not the blood of goats and calves—he entered the Most Holy Place once for all time and secured our redemption forever. ... For by the power of the eternal Spirit, Christ offered himself to God as a perfect sacrifice for our sins. ¹⁵ That is why he is the one who mediates a new covenant between God and people, so that all who are called can receive the eternal inheritance God has promised them. For Christ died to set them free from the penalty of the sins they had committed under that first covenant.

The picture is that Jesus is our mercy seat or propitiation who stands between guilty sinners and a holy God. He absorbed the punishment that we deserved. He died instead of us—sin is punished and the wrath of God is appeased.

Conclusion: We are "*justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵ whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood*" (Romans 3:24-25).