

- This atonement is received by faith in the blood of Jesus: “*a propitiation through faith in his blood.....*” How is it possible for a thrice holy God to dwell in the midst of a sinful people? God’s provision in both the Old and New Testaments is by means of the blood of the sin-offering sprinkled on the mercy seat – God’s throne of mercy.
  - When God killed an animal and clothed Adam and Eve with its skin, God was showing that the way of reconciliation with Him was through shedding the blood of an acceptable substitute.
  - In the OT sacrificial system, God required the Israelites to kill a male firstborn lamb or goat without blemish and use its blood as the propitiation or atoning sacrifice for their sins (Lev 17:11). It pictured the substitutionary death of the victim in place of the sinner. It pointed ahead to Jesus, the Lamb of God, the ultimate and all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins (1 Cor 11:25).
- There is no other approach to a holy God. Our sins are removed by means of the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Christ is our Mercy Seat by virtue of the propitiation (atonement) which He offered to God (Heb 2:17; 1 John 2:2). Christ’s blood (death) is the ground or means by which God’s wrath is propitiated, appeased, or satisfied (Heb 9:22; Rom 5:9). The death of Christ satisfied the righteous wrath of God toward those who believe. Jesus is our “propitiation.” He is the sacrifice that satisfied the offended justice of God. Therefore, in God’s presence, the believer in Christ is declared free from any guilt and is accepted righteous in His sight.
- “*For the remission of sins*” - “Remission” means to cancel a debt or to refrain from exacting it. We have a debt of sin. Now that debt or the penalty has been paid by Christ. Paul states that this remission extends to “*sins that are past through the forbearance of God.*” The death of Christ also paid fully for sins committed before He died. God, in His forbearance, left sins committed unpunished, waiting until Calvary, when those sins would be paid (Acts 17:30). The death of Christ reached backward as well as forward in its benefits.
- Instead of punishing us as we deserve, God provided the perfect substitute for sin – Jesus Christ. Our punishment was paid by Another. So, God can be just and still justifying sinful men. The cross where Jesus shed His blood to satisfy God’s wrath against our sin displays God’s justice. God didn’t just shrug off our sin (Rom 6:23). Jesus, who was innocent of all sin, paid the penalty that we deserved as He bore the awful wrath of God on the cross (Matt 27:46). On the cross, God’s justice was satisfied so that His mercy could flow to every sinner who trusts in Jesus. The punishment we deserve is taken by Christ on our behalf, so that God is just, and He is also the Justifier of them who believe in Jesus. The benefits of Jesus’ death do not apply to everyone. God only justifies the one who has faith in Jesus – “*which believeth in Jesus.*”

### 3. The Implications of Justification (3:27-31)

- Justification by Faith Excludes all Boasting (vv27-28). Because we are made righteous by the work of Christ and through no merit of our own, there is no ground for boasting (Eph 2:8-9; Phil 3:9). We can’t boast about our morality, religiosity, spiritual knowledge, or even our faith (cf John 6:44; Phil 1:29). No one can boast – certainly not before God - for salvation comes by faith in Christ, apart from works (v28)
- Justification by Faith is Available to all (vv29-30). Salvation is available to everyone - Jews and Gentiles - since it is one God who justifies the circumcision by faith and the uncircumcision through the same faith. The doctrine of justification therefore lays the foundation for a gospel to be preached to everyone in the world (Matt 28:19).
- Justification by Faith Upholds the Law (v31). Instead of invalidating the Law, justification by faith confirms the Law. It is not inconsistent with any of the OT doctrines and invalidates none of the promises. What is taught and promised, the gospel teaches and promises in clearer and fuller measure. The moral law is enforced with newer and stronger motives and the penalty answered in Christ who bore our sins in His own body on the cross. Justification by faith is not a free pass so that you can live however you want. We are not antinomians, meaning against the law. We are not hyper-grace people, who can live however we want to live. The law of God is still binding upon our lives, and we are accountable to God to obey the commandments (7:12,14).

### Notes