

Vicarious Sacrifice: Review: *Dikaiosúnē* & the Composites of the Integrity of God; Rom 3:25: “the Blood of Christ”: Literal Blood on the Mercy Seat Is Symbolic for the Spiritual Death of Christ on the Cross: “Blood (*haíma*) of Christ”: Walter Bauer: “figurative”; Kittel: “a pregnant verbal symbol”; Bullinger: “metonymy”; Thieme: “metaphor”; Blood Refers to the Lord’s Spiritual Death

1. The sentence continues with further explanation that brings out additional doctrines associate with our so great salvation:
Romans 3:25 - whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;
2. The public display was at Golgotha. Propitiation means that God’s integrity was satisfied with the sacrifice. The word “propitiation” is **ἱλαστήριος (*hilastérios*)** which is literally translated “mercy seat.”
3. The verse continues with the phrase “in His blood,” the proof of the innocent animal’s sacrifice associated with the Levitical ritual on Yom Kippur.

ἱλαστήριος; Paul, by applying this name to Christ in Romans 3:25, assures us that Christ was the true mercy seat, the reality typified by the cover on the ark of the covenant. Jesus Christ is designated as ἱλαστήριον in Romans 3:25 and Hebrews 9:5 because He is designated not only as the place where the sinner deposits his sin, but He Himself is the means of expiation.

In the Old Testament, through a system of sacrifices, God taught the way by which a sinful man or woman might approach Him. Sin means death, which basically is separation from God. The sacrificial system was a way whereby God provided the means of approaching Him through escaping sin and its basic consequences. Through it another died in the sinner’s place. This was never another man, but an animal. The nation was to be thus represented by the high priest annually on the Day of Atonement when the blood of the offering was sprinkled upon the mercy seat (*hilastérion*) on the arc of the covenant within the Holy of Holies of the Jewish temple. (p. 771)

When we come to the Apostle Paul’s use of the word *hilastérion* in Romans 3:25, it is scarcely possible that he conceives of the Messiah as a “mercy seat” or “covering of the ark,” sprinkled with blood—His own blood. What the apostle refers to with the word *hilastérion* is the means of gaining the favor of God through Jesus Christ. (p. 772)

4. That the blood of the animal is used figuratively for the sacrificial spiritual death of Christ is explained in the following excerpts:

In the Bible, αἷμα (*haíma*), “blood,” can have several literal meanings which include human blood and animal blood. However when the New Testament speaks of the blood in relation to the sacrifice of Christ, it *does not* refer to literal blood. “The blood of Christ” is always a figure of speech. The Greek lexicographer, Walter Bauer, devotes an entire paragraph to the figurative use of the word in relation to Christ: (p. 2)

αἷμα figurative: blood and life as an expiatory sacrifice—especially of the blood of Jesus as a means of expiation; Romans 3:25.²

¹ Spiros Zodhiates, gen. ed., “ἱλαστήριος,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 771–72.

² Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilber Gingrich, 2d ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 22–23.

Further, Kittel's *Theological Dictionary* confirms that:

... the early Christian representation of the blood of Christ as sacrificial blood is simply the metaphorical garment clothing the thought of the self-offering, the obedience to God, which Christ demonstrated in the crucifixion (Philippians 2:8; Romans 5:19; Hebrews 5:8). The history of belief in the atoning and purifying power of blood, especially among the Israelites and Greeks, does not help us to understand the ideas which the New Testament links with the blood of Christ, since the latter is simply a pregnant verbal symbol for the saving work of Christ.³

(E. W.) Bullinger categorizes phrases such as “justified by His blood” (Romans 5:9, cf. Ephesians 1:7; 2:13, and Revelation 1:5) as metalepsis or double metonymy.⁴

In the New Testament, the expression “the blood of Christ” is the figure metalepsis, i.e., it means not merely the actual blood corpuscles, neither does it mean His death as an act, but the merits of the atonement effected by it and associated with it. (p. 610)

We lose nothing of the facts, but gain immensely as to their meaning, when we understand that “blood” is put for *death*, and “death” for the atonement made by it and all its infinite merits.⁵ (p. 611)

In other words, Christ did not bleed to death to pay the penalty of sin. The term, blood of Christ, is a metaphor for His expiatory death in which He received the judgment that removed the penalty of sin.⁶ (p. 3)

Romans 3:25a - whom God has publicly displayed by His blood [atoning sacrifice] as the mercy seat [propitiation: the metonymy] through faith in Christ,

46. The next phrase we note in verse 25 is, “to demonstrate His righteousness.” The word “demonstrate” is the accusative of purpose of the noun **ἐνδειξις** (*éndeixis*): “to provide evidence.”
47. What is in evidence is righteousness: *dikaíosunē*. God is providing proof that His righteousness had to be satisfied by the propitiation of a valid Substitute which the blood of the Levitical animals did not provide.
48. The reason for this is stated next: “because of the forbearance of God.” “Forbearance is the noun **ἀνοχή** (*anochē*): “indulgence; to put up with.”
49. God’s indulgence was toward the sins that were “passed over” in the ritual performed at Yom Kippur. The phrase “passed over” is the noun **πάρεσις** (*páresis*) and it refers to the atonement at the Mercy Seat where the sins were not forgiven but rather the divine wrath which they warranted was suspended.
50. These passed-over sins close out the verse: “sins previously committed.” Here is the expanded translation of the verse:

³ Johannes Behm, “αἷμα,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans./ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 1:175.

⁴ Metonymy is “a figure of speech consisting of the use of the name of one thing for that of another with which it is associated” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “metonymy.”)

⁵ E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1898; Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), 610–11.

⁶ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *The Blood of Christ*, 5th ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2002), 2–3.

Romans 3:25 - whom God has publicly displayed by His [Jesus'] blood [atoning sacrifice] as the mercy seat [propitiation: the metonymy] through faith in Christ, for a demonstration of His divine righteousness [imputed at salvation resulting in justification], because of the indulgence of God in passing over previously committed sins (EXT)