

Vicarious Sacrifice: Propitiation: Literally “Mercy Seat”; Notes on the Correlation of Yom Kippur with the Crucifixion: the Etymology of the *Dikē* Word Group: *Dikaiosúnē*: the Thinking of a Judge & *Dikaiosúnē Theou*: Composites of the Integrity, or Love, of God: Righteousness, Justice, Grace, & Omniscience, Rom 3:21

13. **Propitiation** is the Godward side of the work of Christ in salvation. It means that the Lord’s substitutionary sacrifice satisfied the righteousness and justice of God.

Propitiation frees the justice of God to impute divine righteousness to anyone who believes in Christ.

Romans 5:8 - God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died as a substitute for us.

How would the Jew come to the knowledge that he is a sinner, one who has violated the mandates of the Mosaic Law? The sacrifices related to atonement for committed sin. Example: Yom Kippur where the blood of the innocent goat served to appease the integrity of God for sins committed during the previous year.

Notes on the Correlation of Yom Kippur with the Crucifixion:

1. The first month of the Jewish civil year is Tishri and the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur, was conducted on the tenth day.
2. The word “kippur” comes from the root word **כִּפַּר** (*kiphar*): At its most basic level, the word conveys the notion of covering. The word also communicates God’s covering of sin. Persons made reconciliation with God for their sins by imposing something that would appease the offended party (in this case the Lord).¹
3. The concept of covering is summarized by this footnote in *The Scofield Study Bible*:

The Levitical offerings “covered” the sins of Israel until and in anticipation of the cross, but did not take away those sins (Hebrews 10:4). These were the sins done in Old Testament times, which God “passed over,” and for which passing over God’s righteousness was never vindicated until, in the cross, Jesus Christ was “displayed as a propitiation.” It was the cross, not the Levitical sacrifices, which made full and complete redemption. The Old Testament sacrifices enabled God to go on with a guilty people because those sacrifices typified the cross.²
4. Paul discusses that which was covered in the Old Testament but removed by the work of Christ on the cross. His remarks on justification by faith is introduced in:

Romans 3:19 - We understand that whatever things the Law communicates, it speaks to those who are under the jurisdiction of the Law to their advantage [the Israelites were benefitted by having the Law because it revealed the coming Savior] for the purpose that no one would have anything to say [in their defense regarding a self-righteous modus operandi thus condemning everyone] and the whole world may become accountable to God.

¹ Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 520.

² C. I. Scofield, “Atonement,” in *The Scofield Study Bible: NASB* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 177n16:6.

v. 20 - Therefore by the works of the Law no individual shall be justified [δικαιοσύνη (*dikaíosúnē*)] in His presence; for through the Law is a consciousness of sin. (EXT)

5. Paul now moves to a discussion of justification which he will demonstrate is the result of propitiation. In so doing, he introduces a new phrase that broadens the believer's understanding of the character of God.
6. **Romans 3:21** includes the phrase "the righteousness of God" where the word "righteousness" translates the same Greek noun δικαιοσύνη (*dikaíosúnē*) in verse 20.
7. The development of this word from ninth-century Homeric Greek to first-century Koine Greek sheds abundant light on the thinking of God regarding the mechanics of our salvation.
8. This etymological evolution of the word δίκη (*dikē*) is the subject of this summation by R. B. Thieme, Jr.:

Dikaíosúnē is what we call a second stage word construction in the organization of the Greek language. In the time of Homer, which is our ninth-century B.C. exposure to the Greek language, we have two words, a noun and an adjective: δίκη [*dikē*] and δίκαιος, [*dikaíos*]. Both of these are simple words for in Homeric times, simple words were used. The multi-syllable word did not come into the Greek language until the time of Attic Greek and, in the fifth century B.C. when thought became much deeper, it required some very special technical words.

So the Greeks invented a suffix which comes off of the *d-i-k* base. This *d-i-k* base meant righteousness in Homeric Greek. But when you take a suffix *-súnē* and add it to it you now have moved into abstract thought.

The translation in the King James Version is "But now the righteousness of God." However, the word "righteousness" can be correct, but it isn't here. It does not fulfill the true meaning of the noun, nor does it recognize the tremendous changes that occurred first in Classical or Attic Greek and later on in Koine Greek.

Now go back to *dikē* for a moment and the adjective *dikaíos*: they definitely had a connotation of righteousness, but even they changed. *Dikaíos*, for example, by the time it reached Koine Greek, meant many things beside righteous. It means the thinking of a judge, among other things. But when you add *-súnē* to this you have a legal connotation. This is an abstract legal noun and because it is, it is universally mistranslated in the New Testament.

Dikaíosúnē means fair and equitable in dealing with others; it meant virtue, justice, integrity; justice as a characteristic of a judge, justice as the thinking of a judge. It also means the integrity of a judge.

Solon was the famous legislator who had so much to do with establishing Athens as the great intellectual center. Solon's legislation had considerable influence on the development of this word. *Dikaíosúnē* connotes not just righteousness but righteousness as a principle leading to action and thought: thinking action, thinking something that is correct. Thinking something that is right. This was its general development as far as the Greek language is concerned, but the Bible adds another problem.

In the Bible we find that with *dikaíosúnē* we have it related to God—we have, for example (in Romans 3:21), *dikaíosúnē Theóu*. This particular phrase makes a great change in *dikaíosúnē* because this is the righteousness of God, the justice of God, the integrity of God. Whenever *dikaíosúnē* is related to God, then we have an entirely different meaning. It always refers to one of three things: (1) the entire integrity of God [righteousness, justice, grace, & omniscience] or (2) it can refer to a part of the integrity of God; it can refer to ... God's righteousness or it can refer to justice. Remember that *dikaíosúnē* is an abstract noun and always has the connotation of integrity, and it doesn't mean simply the righteousness of God, when that is the meaning in the verse, it means righteousness as the principle of God's integrity. So it's not just simple righteousness, it means righteousness in a relationship with all of the attributes of God—infinite, eternal—and therefore incomprehensible apart from the revelation of doctrine.

Used of the believer it is a synonym to εὐσέβεια [*eusébeia*: godliness], the technical word for maximum adjustment to the justice of God. So when *dikaíosúnē* is used for a believer, it is a synonym for *eusébeia*, or total relationship with the integrity of God. *Dikaíosúnē*, used of man, also has another technical meaning—justification, or possessing part of the integrity of God. It can be justification or salvation adjustment to the justice of God. It can be justification or cracking the maturity barrier, another principle of vindication from the integrity of God. Justification means that the justice of God is free to bless man without compromising His character or any attribute.

Our point of reference with God is the integrity of God and specifically, the justice of God. So for God to bless us from His integrity, God has to give us His righteousness. There is no blessing for us ever until we have God's very own righteousness.

So we translate this not “the righteousness of God,” but “the integrity of God,” emphasizing divine righteousness as the principle of integrity and divine justice as the function of integrity.³

Romans 3:21 - Now apart from the Law the righteousness composite of the integrity of God has been revealed, being confirmed by the Law and the prophets, (EXT)

v. 22 - even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; (NASB)

9. If sin has been judged at the cross and forgiven at salvation, then the believer is qualified to receive blessing from the justice of God.

³ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Romans*, R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 459-95, MP3. (05-06-77)