

Message Two

The Expiation Cover—the Propitiation Place

Scripture Reading: Exo. 25:16-22; 37:6-9; Lev. 16:14-15, 29-30; Heb. 4:16; 9:3-5

- I. The expiation cover (Exo. 25:16-22; 37:6-9), the propitiation place, was the sin-covering lid on the Ark; Romans 3:25 says that Christ is our propitiation place:**
- A. As a type in the Old Testament, the expiation cover, the lid of the Ark, was hidden in the Holy of Holies; in the New Testament Christ as the propitiation place, the reality of the expiation cover, is openly set forth before all men—v. 25.
 - B. The Ark was the place where God met with His people; in the Ark was the law of the Ten Commandments, which by its holy and righteous requirement exposed and condemned the sins of the people who came to contact God; however, by the lid of the Ark, with the propitiating blood sprinkled on it on the Day of Expiation, the entire situation on the sinner's side was fully covered—Lev. 16:14-16.
 - C. Therefore, upon this sin-covering lid God could meet with the people who broke His righteous law, and He could do this without, governmentally, any contradiction to His righteousness, even under the observing of the cherubim that bore His glory and overshadowed the lid of the Ark—Exo. 25:22.
 - D. Thus, the problem between man and God was appeased, enabling God to forgive and be merciful to man and thereby to give His grace to man.
 - E. This is a prefigure of Christ as the Lamb of God taking away the sin that caused man to have a problem with God, thus satisfying all the requirements of God's holiness, righteousness, and glory and appeasing the relationship between man and God.
 - F. Hence, God could pass over the people's sins that had previously occurred; and, in order to show forth His righteousness, He had to do this; this is what Romans 3:25 refers to.
 - G. The Hebrew word for the lid of the Ark is *kapporeth*, from a root meaning "to cover"; in the Septuagint this word is translated *hilasterion*, which means "the place of propitiation" (implying to forgive and to give mercy—the word rendered "propitious" in Hebrews 8:12 is the root of *hilasterion*, and the word rendered "propitiated" in Luke 18:13 is derived from this root).
 - H. The King James Version adopts the rendering "mercy seat," referring to the place where God grants mercy to man; in Hebrews 9:5 Paul used the word *hilasterion* for the lid of the Ark; in Romans 3:25, the same word, *hilasterion*, is used to show that the lid of the Ark signifies Christ as the propitiation place set forth by God.
 - I. In addition to *hilasterion*, two other words derived from the same Greek word as *hilasterion* are used in the New Testament to show how Christ took away man's sin to appease the relationship between man and God:
 - 1. One is *hilaskomai* (Heb. 2:17), which means "to propitiate," that is, "to appease," to reconcile one by satisfying the other's demand; Christ has reconciled us to God by satisfying God's demands on us.
 - 2. The other is *hilasmos* (1 John 2:2; 4:10), which means "that which propitiates," that is, a propitiatory sacrifice.
 - J. Christ made propitiation for our sins (Heb. 2:17); hence, He has become that which propitiates, the propitiatory sacrifice, between us and God (1 John 2:2; 4:10), and He has also become the place, as typified by the lid of the Ark (Heb. 9:5), where we enjoy propitiation before God and where God gives grace to us.

K. Therefore, Christ is the One who propitiates, He is the propitiatory sacrifice, and He is the propitiatory cover, the place where God and His redeemed people meet together—Exo. 25:21-22.

II. The expiation cover, the place of propitiation, signifies Christ as the cover of God's righteous law and also the place where God speaks to His redeemed people in grace; hence, the place of propitiation equals God's throne of grace; this throne of grace, the place where God gives us grace, is actually the shepherding Christ Himself who is enthroned between the cherubim and dwells in our spirit—Heb. 4:16; Psa. 80:1; Exo. 25:22:

A. The pure gold of which the cover was made signifies Christ's pure divine nature.

B. The measurements of the expiation cover signify a testimony—v. 17.

III. "And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work you shall make them, at the two ends of the expiation cover"—v. 18:

A. The cherubim signify God's glory (Ezek. 10:18; Heb. 9:5); thus, the cherubim on the expiation cover indicate that Christ expresses God's glory (John 1:14).

B. That the cherubim were made of beaten work indicates that Christ's expressing of the divine glory was through sufferings—cf. Heb. 2:9-10; Rom. 8:17-18.

IV. "And make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; of one piece with the expiation cover you shall make the cherubim on its two ends"—Exo. 25:19:

A. That the two cherubim were one piece with the expiation cover indicates that God's glory shines out from Christ and upon Christ as the expiation cover to be a testimony—cf. John 1:14; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6.

B. The form, size, and weight of the cherubim are not given, indicating that the glory of Christ's shining is immeasurable and mysterious—cf. John 3:34.

V. "And the cherubim shall spread out their wings above the cover, covering the expiation cover with their wings, with their faces toward one another; the faces of the cherubim shall be toward the expiation cover"—Exo. 25:20:

A. That the wings of the cherubim covered the expiation cover indicates that God's glory is expressed in Christ to be a full testimony—Heb. 1:3a; Eph. 3:21 and footnote 4.

B. The faces of the cherubim were toward each other and toward the cover, signifying that God's glory watches over and observes what Christ has done.

VI. "And you shall put the expiation cover upon the Ark above it, and into the Ark you shall put the Testimony that I shall give you"—Exo. 25:21:

A. That the cherubim and the expiation cover were made of pure gold (vv. 17-18) signifies that the shining of Christ as the effulgence of God's glory (Heb. 1:3a) is divine.

B. That the expiation cover of gold was put on top of the Ark of acacia wood (Exo. 25:10) signifies that Christ's humanity, not His divinity, is the base for Him to express the glory of His divine nature; acacia wood signifies Christ's human nature, strong in character and high in standard.

VII. "And there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the expiation cover, from between the two cherubim which are upon the Ark of the Testimony, of everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel"—v. 22; cf. Psa. 80:1; Heb. 9:3-5:

A. That God met with His people and spoke to them from above the expiation cover and between the cherubim signifies that God meets with us and speaks to us in the propitiating

Christ and in the glory expressed in the propitiating Christ as His testimony—cf. 2 Cor. 3:8-11, 18:

1. The glory in which God meets with us and in which He speaks to us is the immeasurable and unexplainable shining of Christ.
 2. The place of propitiation, the expiation cover, with the cherubim is nothing less than our dear Lord Jesus Himself; whenever God meets with us and speaks with us, this precious Christ is present; actually, it is in this shining Christ that God meets with us and speaks with us.
 3. It is important to see that propitiation is not only an act; it is also Christ Himself as a place; according to Romans 3:25, God set up Christ Himself, the person, to be a propitiation cover; it is upon this person that God can meet with us and we can meet with God.
 4. The propitiatory blood sprinkled upon the expiation cover, the propitiation cover (Lev. 16:14-15), satisfies the requirements of God's righteous law under the cover and God's holy nature and shining glory above the cover and thus gives peace to man's conscience.
- B. Thus, the expiation cover with the blood of the sacrifices sprinkled on it on the Day of Expiation (vv. 14-15, 29-30) portrays the redeeming Christ in His humanity (with His judicial redemption) and the shining Christ in His divinity (with His organic salvation) as the place where fallen sinners can meet with the righteous, holy, and glorious God and hear His word, thereby being infused with God as grace and receiving vision, revelation, and instruction from Him to control their daily life (Prov. 29:18):
1. When God comes to us in the glory of Christ, He does not see the requirements of His righteous law, and He does not see our sins; instead, He sees the redeeming blood on the expiation cover.
 2. Christ's humanity is for redeeming, and His divinity is for shining; the cherubim on the expiation cover signify Christ's shining with His divinity, and the blood sprinkled on the cover signifies His humanity for redeeming; now we and God can meet together and talk together in the redeeming and shining Christ.
 3. Upon the expiatory cover and in the midst of the shining of His glory, we can hear God's voice and learn the desire of His heart.
 4. Furthermore, the more time we spend with the Lord, having the realization of His precious blood and shining glory, the more He infuses Himself into us; living Christ is the spontaneous issue of being infused with Him—cf. 2 Cor. 3:18; Phil. 1:19-21a.
- C. To be a Christian who receives God's infusion in the Holy of Holies and walks according to it is to be a Christian in the most wonderful sense of all; it is to be a Christian in the Lord's ultimate recovery that will terminate this age, usher in the age of the kingdom, and ultimately issue in the New Jerusalem.