Mercy Seat- Christ our Propitiation Part 1

By Charles Feinberg

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This is the ninth message on the tabernacle in the wilderness God's panorama of redemption. The ninth message by Dr. Charles Lee Feinberg dean of Talbot Theological Seminary in La Mirada California. The theme of this final message is in many ways climax of it all. The Mercy Seat. This study is on the mercy seat and our basic passage is Exodus 25 verses 17 to 22 Exodus 25 17 to 22. If you have your Bible with you be wonderful for you to follow. It impresses it upon your mind all the more. We read and thou shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof and a cubit and a half the breath thereof and thou shalt make two cherubim of gold a beaten work shalt thou make them in the two ends of the Mercy Seat and make one cherub on the one end the other cherub on the other end even of the Mercy Seat shall you make the Cherubim on the two ends thereof.

And the Cherubim shall stretch forth their wings on high covering the mercy seat with their wings and their faces shall look one to another toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the Cherubim be and thou shall put the mercy seat above upon the Ark and in the Ark thou shall put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat. Notice the importance of this mercy seat. There I will meet with thee. That was God's rendezvous and I will commune with you from above the mercy seat from between the two cherubim which are upon the Ark of the testimony of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.
This mention of the mercy seat is followed by another mention in Exodus 26. Chapter Verse 34 thou shalt put the Mercy Seat upon the Ark of the testimony in the most holy place. And then we have a number of verses in Exodus the thirty seventh chapter specifically verses 6 to 9 that speak of the mercy seat. How Bezalel made the mercy seat of pure gold two cubits and half the length thereof one cubit and a half the breadth thereof. He made two cherubim of gold beaten out of one piece made he them on the two ends of the mercy seat. One Cherub on the one hand on this side another cherub on the other end on that side. Out of the mercy seat made he the Cherubim on the two ends thereof and the Cherubim spread out their wings on high and covered with their wings over the mercy seat with their faces one to another even toward the mercy seat where the faces of the Cherubim. We have the mention of the mercy seat in Exodus 39 verse 35. In chapter 40 verse 20 and other instances. The Mercy Seat what does the mercy seat speak to us of we shall see in just a moment. What was the material of the mercy seat?

We saw what the materials were in the bronze altar the bronze Laver table of showbread, the Golden Lamp Stand the golden altar of incense we saw what the veil was made of and we saw the material of the Ark of the Covenant. This is a material representation it's important for us to know these material because it's a material tangible visible manifest indication of God. Of his glorious redemptive plan for man. What was the material then of the Mercy Seat. Well it was a slab. It was a block really a slab of solid gold covering the whole Ark. It rested on the Ark as a lid. It had the same dimensions the same extent as the ark. Friends never forget it the exercise of God's mercy is based on the person. On the work on the activity of the Lord Jesus Christ and it is co extensive with it answers to it feature for feature part for part. Not one single area left out in any particular whatever. Now what was the purpose of the Mersey seat? It formed the only meeting place between God and man.
You see how vital it was then. Exodus 25 22. And there I will meet with thee where? The mercy seat. There I will meet with you and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat from between the two cherubim I'm going to be there which are upon the Ark of the testimony of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel the mercy seat in Hebrew meaning is covering kapporeth it's a covering, an atonement. Shows that all the claims against us of the law have been met. They've been satisfied they have been covered just as we speak of a debt or an expense big covered a big mess I'll cover that bill for you. This is the sense in which this covering satisfied the righteous claims of God. Against man. In Leviticus 16.


We read that he should take the blood of the Bullock the high priest and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy seat eastward and before the mercy seat shall he sprinkle of the blood with his fingers seven times. Yes. He met the righteous demands of God. On the Day of Atonement. The High Priest sprinkled the blood of the sin offering once upon the mercy seat eastward and seven times before it. One saint of God. Commenting on it of the sprinkling of the seven times said once it was supposed to be once upon the mercy once was sufficient for the eye of God. Then seven times before it Grace suffered it to be sprinkled before the propitiatory to assure us who are so slow of heart to believe. Sprinkle seven times to indicate to us the perfectness of the standing ground which Christ has procured for all his people. For time and eternity. Now there was blood on the Gold blood on the Gold shows Christ's death met the demands the claims of God's glory we had failed to do so all of sin had come short of the glory of God. But the blood on the Gold shows Christ's death met all the claims of God's glory and his righteousness God's mercy is now exercised.
It is now extended to sinful man on a righteous ground. The death of Christ. Purpose to make of a judgment seat. A mercy seat in Hebrews 9:12. We read verse 11 is where we should begin. But Christ being high priest of good things to come by greater and more perfect Tabernacle not made with hands that is to say not of this building. Neither by the blood of goats and cows but by his own bloody end. In once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption for us, yes. Having obtained eternal redemption for us the death of Christ's purpose to make a judgment seat a mercy seat. Christ is our great mercy seat himself. In Psalm 85. We have it in beautiful poetic form and we're going to see in the great doctrinal portion of Romans. The same truth stated in doctrinal terms but notice it stated here in the Psalms in Psalm 85 and verse ten we read mercy and truth are met together. That's the cross. Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

This we have in the mercy seat now where in the New Testament is Christ ever indicated as our mercy seat. Well the first place we have it. Romans 3 and verse twenty five in that great cathedral of the faith we read after we've read that all have sinned and come short the glory of God being justified now freely by his grace through the redemption that's in Christ Jesus. How was this done? Christ Jesus is the one whom God has set forth to be a propitiation. *Hilasterion* what do you mean by a propitiation. He is our mercy seat our mercy seat sprinkled with blood. God set him forth to be the satisfying sacrifice the sacrifice that satisfied God so that he could be merciful. Let loose the sluice gates of God's grace and mercy upon sinful man whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. Notice propitiation Mercy Seat always with blood to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are passed through the forbearance of God. Yes but that's not the only wonderful place where we have the statement that Christ is our propitiation. First John the second chapter.
Beautiful word to the little children my little children these things I write unto you first
John 2:1 that you sin not don't go on living in sin. But if any man any Christian man commits an
act of sin we have an advocate. Yes an attorney. Not with the judge. We have an advocate with a
father. Christ hasn't ceased to be our father when we have sinned as believers. He has a way for
us to come back. We have an advocate with the father Jesus Christ the righteous and he who is
Jesus Christ the righteous he is the propitiation he's the mercy seat for our sins and not for ours
only but also for the sins of the whole world. He made provision for all of this world. Yes. Christ
is our mercy seat the mercy seat then in the tabernacle indicated speaks to us of Christ. Our
propitiation Christ is our mercy seat himself God made him that as we're told in Romans 3:25
and first John 2:2. William Cowper the great poet of England who had long been depressed by
religious melancholy drove himself to a state of despair. He gives the fine. He gives this final
following account of his conversion. When God freed him from his melancholy his depression
his despair.

This is the way he puts it the happy period which was to shake off my fetters and afford
me a clear discovery of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus was now arrived. I flung myself
into a chair near the window and seeing a Bible there ventured once more to apply to it for
comfort and instruction and to think of the grace of God. Notice what he found the first verse I
saw was the 25th of the third chapter of Romans where God has made Christ setting forth a
propitiation a mercy seat for us sinners. Immediately I received strength to believe said William
Kaapor. And the full beams of the sun of righteousness shown upon me. I saw the sufficiency yet
made for my pardon and justification. In a moment I believed and received the peace of the
Gospel. Unless the almighty arm had been under me. I think I should have been overwhelmed
with gratitude and joy. Now where was the position of the mercy seat? Where was it located?
What was its situation? The mercy seat was immediately on top of the Ark of the Covenant as its lid.

Now there was no word in the lid but it rested on the Ark that was made of Acacia overlaid with wood. Remember inside and outside. God's grace rests on the divine human one. The mercy seat carried with it the idea of rest it was God's resting place. The only seat in the tabernacle where God could rest complacently was occupied by God himself the only seat in the tabernacle was occupied by God himself. It was the mercy seat. God finds a place of rest where? In the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. No other place for the soul of sinful man to rest either. Matthew 11:28 come unto me come unto me all of ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Here is a resting place but it's not only a seat it's a mercy seat where mercy sat. Mercy sat there because the broken law was covered. Mercy comes through Christ because justice is fully satisfied in him and in Him alone. Now we read it in Exodus with reference to the mercy seat.

That there were to be crowns on the Ark. a crown of gold round about the top of the Ark speaks of Christ crowned with honor and glory in the very presence of God. Hebrews 2:9 speaks of power and security. What did the crown around the Ark [inaudible] of the Ark do? Well they kept the lid of the Ark from moving out of its place. Is that important. Oh my dear friends it is very very important. Why? The law can only minister death if that covering is removed for a moment Grace is hindered and judgment leaps out. Wild Christ our savior sits before the father. Mercy is enthroned. The time is going to come when Christ will arise. The lid will be lifted from that Ark. The throne of mercy will be removed. The day of grace will be over. That's why Paul says so carefully and repeatedly.
Behold now is excepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. Is it important that that crown around the Ark secure the lid, the mercy seat so that it doesn't shift around oh yes. Oh yes you remember in 1 Samuel 6. Verse 19, 21 the men of the city of Beth Shemesh lifted up that Lid. Here it is. First Samuel 6 19 to 21. And he smote the men at Beth Shemesh God did because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord. Yes they had removed that mercy seat and looked into the Ark of the Lord. You know how many he smote? Now there are a lot of folk who tell them tell us that this is a scribal error. Some think there are discrepant statements. Here are numbers but there were certainly a great number that were smitten. He smote of the people fifty thousand threescore and ten men. That means fifty thousand and seventy men died and the people lamented because the Lord had smitten many of the people with a great slaughter.

There were many folk why? For doing what? Looking into the ark of the Lord. And the men of Beth Shemesh said who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God and to whom shall he go up from us. That's first Samuel 6 19 to 21 the men of Beth Shemesh lifted the lid. And judgment. Sprang out. God smote. So many people of Beth Shemesh that day. Many of them and you remember how they cried. Who is able to stand before this Holy Lord God? The answer my dear friends is nobody no one can stand before this Lord God when the mercy seat is removed. When a sinner despises the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ do you know what he does? He lays himself open. Oh how seriously he lays himself open. Disastrously so to the vengeance of the broken law. Now what was on the top? Of The Mercy Seat.

Well it tells us verse 18 of Exodus 25 thou shalt make two cherubim of gold of beaten work shalt thou make them and the two ends of the Mercy Seat and it'll be all part of the same slab of solid gold a Cherubim at one side make one Cherub on the one end. And there was to be a cherub on the other side the cherub on the other end even of the mercy seat shall you make the
Cherubim on the two ends thereof. And what are these cherubim going to do. They're going to stretch forth their wings you're going to represent these Cherubim with outstretched wings on high. They're going to be lifted up covering the mercy seat with their wings as though to shield it and their faces are going to look one to another toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the Cherubim be they're going to be in two different areas. In other words they're going to look at one another. And at the same time they will be able to look at the mercy seat. This with reference to the cherubim.

Some commentators on the word of God have certainly given us some beautiful truths concerning these Cherubim. On top of the mercy seat and at both sides were cherubim with outstretched wings looking toward the mercy seat and facing one another. We'd like to give some of the possible highlights of the meaning of these cherubim on the mercy seat. It's in Genesis Chapter 3 Verse 24 that we have the first mention of these creatures of God called cherubim. The first mention of it appears that they symbolize righteousness and judgment because they guarded the way to the tree of life lest Adam and Eve take of that tree eat and live forever in that fallen condition of theirs. So that's the first mentioned course. They were live creatures. Those cherubim on the mercy seat were representations made in gold but they do symbolize righteousness and judgment.

Why do we go back to Genesis 3:24 because there is a great scriptural principle of interpretation friends and that's this whenever you find the first mention of anything in the Bible it has a way of striking a chord. It has a way of indicating what may be the general line of truth from this time on through the end of the Bible. So these cherubim symbolize righteousness and judgment. Now the various interpretations have been given to these creatures none of them seems to be mutually exclusive. Some think the Cherubim represent the attributes of God. Others
say they are the executives of God. Still others say that they are the emblems of the redeemed
and it's in that last area that we'd like to bring out some truths from the Cherubim.

Now the Cherubim were embroidered on the curtains of the Tabernacle and the veil as we
saw in the message on the veil. So they were rent with the veil that's co-crucifixion with Christ
Galatians 2:20 says. Paul says I have been crucified with Christ what happened to Christ
physically back there about 20 centuries ago happened to me. What happened to him physically
happened to me spiritually when I identify with it when I see by intention what he did for me.
My mind is riveted that he did that for me. So there is rich truth. If we take these cherubim as
representing the Redeem just as in the veil. We see it with Christ in the glory blessed to be the
God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who have blessed us with all spiritual blessings. Where?
In the heavenliness in Christ Jesus. Yes seated with him. Notice they appear, Cherubim do, in
Ezekiel chapter 1 and 10. Beautiful Truth there as well. Concerning the Cherubim. Now the
nature and course of the church are beautifully set forth in the Cherubim. First of all notice the
origin of these cherubim in Ezekiel one verse four and five.

There the spirit of God takes time to tell us the background or the origination of these
cherubim. Out of the midst of the fire. Notice, Ezekiel one four and five. And I looked and
behold a whirlwind came out of the North a great cloud and of fire and folding itself and a
brightness was about it and out of the mist of it like the color of amber out of the midst of the
fire. Also out of the mist of it came the likeness of our four living creatures. These are identified
as cherubim in Chapter ten verse 20 this was their appearance. They had the likeness of a man.
Fire is throughout the bible when its use symbolically fire is a symbol of God Hebrews 12 29.
Our God is a consuming fire. The origin of the church. Never forget it. The origin of every
member of the body of Christ is with God. We are redeemed not with corruptible things but with
incorruptible with the very precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we have a right now having trusted Christ and his work on Calvary that blood sacrifice of his. We are now born. We have the right and the warrant to be called the children of God because we're born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man. John tells us that in John 1:12 as many as received Him to them gave you the right to become the children of God. To them that believe on his name who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man but were born of God.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 2:10 through the Spirit of God that we are God's creation we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them. Notice these cherubim their origin out of the midst of the fire fire being a symbol of God the origin of believers of the redeemed is with God. We have a heavenly origin. We are children of God. We are partakers of the divine nature. He hath given us all things needful for life and godliness. That's their origin. Notice their character. They are called in Ezekiel 1:5 living creatures not dying creatures. These possess life we never find with reference to the cherubim that there's anything stated concerning debility concerning death and if they are of angelic order of course Angels do not decrease they do not increase.

They do not change the Holy Angels always remain holy angels and those that are unholy fallen angels remain unholy and fallen angels. These are not dying creatures they possess life. Those who belong to God are not of this dying world. We are now alive unto God. We are buried with Christ and we are alive unto God. That origin then from God. Their character. Living Creatures their appearance. The Scriptures said in Ezekiel 1:5 as we read it. The likeness of a man. Oh that's beautiful. The likeness of a man. What does that mean? Each believer it would seem to say in the church of God bears the likeness of the man Christ Jesus that we might be
conformed to the image of God's son that he might be the first born among many creatures. God loves his son so well someone has said that he wants as many likenesses of him as he can get here. Every believer in the church bears the likeness of the man Christ Jesus.

We've been created after the image of him Colossians 3:10. Second Peter 1:4 as we've already quoted we are partakers of the divine nature and also second Corinthians 3:18 in the last verse in second Corinthians 3 tells us that we were changed into that image continually we do with unveiled face behold the image of the Lord and by so much we are changed from glory one stage of glory to another as by the operation of the Lord the spirit. That's the third person of the Trinity. Now in Ezekiel one we are further told concerning these cherubim. The matter of their characteristics. What are their attributes? What do they look like? What would be the description of them? Well the first chapter of Ezekiel again where we find this Ezekiel 1:10. We read of their characteristics that they had four faces Ezekiel 1:10 reads.

As for the lightness of their faces the fore had the face of a man and the face of a lion on the right side the face of an ox on the left side. They also had the face of an eagle so notice that man lion ox Eagle Four Faces the face of a man. That would mean intelligence or wisdom. Christ is made of God unto us wisdom first Corinthians 1:30 had a face these cherubim had the face of a lion Lion is the king of the beasts. Strong and courageous reminds us of the strength that's at our disposal as believers. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me then you have the face of an ox an ox is patient persevering. We have access in this grace wherein we stand so then we can endure trials we can endure persecutions knowing the tribulations work peace patience and patience hope. Hope that makes not a shame why because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given unto us. You remember how much
the apostle James has to say about enduring patiently the trials of this life and I'm sure he was so aware of the number of privations and hardships that the believers had.

The early Jewish believers had in the first century A.D... That's why the Epistle of James begins in verse 2 of chapter 1 my brother and count it all joy not misery not counting the good wonderful occasion for grumbling. Count it all joy when you fall into various trials knowing this that the testing of your faith worketh patience yes patience and let patients have a perfect work that you may be perfect and entire lacking nothing face of an ox patient persevering and then in Ezekiel 1:10. Read at the end. They four also had the face of an eagle an eagle is far seeing and high flying. The saved see in the light of eternity. They have set their affections on things above. That’s the exhortation of the Apostle Paul not only to the church at Colossae but to every believer in every single century of the church's sojourn on earth.

[End part 1]