

Message Two

The Expiation Cover—the Propitiation Place

AY Hymns: 295, 770

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

- Exo 25:16 And you shall put into the Ark the Testimony which I shall give you.
- Exo 25:17 And you shall make an expiation cover of pure gold: two and a half cubits shall be its length, and one and a half cubits, its width.
- Exo 25:18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work you shall make them, at the two ends of the expiation cover.
- Exo 25:19 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 25:20 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 25:21 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 25:22 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.
- Exo 37:6 And he made an expiation cover of pure gold: two and a half cubits was its length, and one and a half cubits, its width.
- Exo 37:7 And he made two cherubim of gold; of beaten work he made them, at the two ends of the expiation cover,
- Exo 37:8 One cherub at the one end and one cherub at the other end; of one piece with the expiation cover he made the cherubim at its two ends.
- Exo 37:9 And the cherubim 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 were toward the expiation cover.
- Lev 16:14 And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger upon the expiation cover toward the east, and before the expiation cover he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.
- Lev 16:15 Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon the expiation cover and before the expiation cover.
- Lev 16:29 And this shall become a perpetual statute for you; in the seventh month on the tenth day of the month you shall afflict your souls and not do any work, neither the native nor the sojourner who sojourns among you.
- Lev 16:30 For on this day expiation shall be made for you, in order to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before Jehovah.
- Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.
- Heb 9:3 And after the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies,
- Heb 9:4 Having a golden altar and the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron's rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant,
- Heb 9:5 And above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the expiation cover, concerning which it is not now the time to speak in detail.

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:

- Exo 25:16 And you shall put into the Ark the Testimony which I shall give you.
- Exo 25:17 And you shall make an expiation cover of pure gold: two and a half cubits shall be its length, and one and a half cubits, its width.
- Exo 25:18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work you shall make them, at the two ends of the expiation cover.
- Exo 25:19 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 25:20 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 25:21 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 25:22 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.
- Exo 37:6 And he made an expiation cover of pure gold: two and a half cubits was its length, and one and a half cubits, its width.
- Exo 37:7 And he made two cherubim of gold; of beaten work he made them, at the two ends of the expiation cover,
- Exo 37:8 One cherub at the one end and one cherub at the other end; of one piece with the expiation cover he made the cherubim at its two ends.
- Exo 37:9 And the cherubim 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 were toward the expiation cover.
- Rom 3:25 Whom God set forth as a propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God passed over the sins that had previously occurred,
- 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.
- Rom 3:25 Whom God set forth as a propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God passed over the sins that had previously occurred,
- 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.
- Lev 16:14 And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger upon the expiation cover toward the east, and before the expiation cover he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.
- Lev 16:15 Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon the expiation cover and before the expiation cover.
- Lev 16:16 And he shall make expiation for the Holy of Holies because of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel and because of their transgressions, for all their sins. And so he shall do for the Tent of Meeting, which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleannesses.
- 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.
- Exo 25:22 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.
- 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.

Rom 3:25 Whom God set forth as a propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God passed over the sins that had previously occurred,

- 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).

Heb 8:12 For I will be propitious to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins I shall by no means remember anymore."

Luke 18:13 But the tax collector, standing at a distance, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, God, be propitiated to me, the sinner!

- 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.

Heb 9:5 And above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the expiation cover, concerning which it is not now the time to speak in detail.

Rom 3:25 Whom God set forth as a propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God passed over the sins that had previously occurred,

- 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.

Heb 2:17 Hence He should have been made like His brothers in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

2. The other is *hilasmos* (1 John 2:2; 4:10), which means “that which propitiates,” that is, a propitiatory sacrifice.

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for those of the whole world.

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins.

- 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.

Heb 2:17 Hence He should have been made like His brothers in all things that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in the things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

1 John 2:2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for those of the whole world.

1 John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins.

Heb 9:5 And above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the expiation cover, concerning which it is not now the time to speak in detail.

- 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.

Exo 25:21 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 25:22 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.

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:

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come forward with boldness to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace for timely help.

Psa 80:1 O Shepherd of Israel, give ear, / You who lead Joseph like a flock; / You who are enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth.

Exo 25:22 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.

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.

Exo 25:17 And you shall make an expiation cover of pure gold: two and a half cubits shall be its length, and one and a half cubits, its width.

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).

Ezek 10:18 And the glory of Jehovah went forth from over the threshold of the house and stood over the cherubim.

Heb 9:5 And above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the expiation cover, concerning which it is not now the time to speak in detail.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

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.

Heb 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death on behalf of everything.

Heb 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things, in leading many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Rom 8:17 And if children, heirs also; on the one hand, heirs of God; on the other, joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him.

Rom 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be revealed upon us.

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.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

2 Cor 4:4 In whom the god of this age has blinded the thoughts of the unbelievers that the illumination of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine on them.

2 Cor 4:6 Because the God who said, Out of darkness light shall shine, is the One who shined in our hearts to illuminate the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

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.

John 3:34 For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for He gives the Spirit not by measure.

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.

Heb 1:3a Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, ...

Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in ⁴Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

note 4 In the church the sphere of God's glorification is narrow, being limited to the household of the faith. But in Christ the sphere is much broader because Christ is the Head of all the families in the heavens and on earth (1:22; 3:15). Hence, God's glorification in Christ is in the realm of all the families created by God, not only on earth but also in the heavens. This is in accord with unto all the generations forever and ever, which means for eternity.

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.

Exo 25:17 And you shall make an expiation cover of pure gold: two and a half cubits shall be its length, and one and a half cubits, its width.

Exo 25:18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of beaten work you shall make them, at the two ends of the expiation cover.

Heb 1:3a Who, being the effulgence of His glory and the impress of His substance and upholding and bearing all things by the word of His power, ...

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.

Exo 25:10 And they shall make an ark of acacia wood: two and a half cubits shall be its length; and one and a half cubits, its width; and one and a half cubits, its height.

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:

Psa 80:1 O Shepherd of Israel, give ear, / You who lead Joseph like a flock; / You who are enthroned between the cherubim, shine forth.

Heb 9:3 And after the second veil, a tabernacle, which is called the Holy of Holies,

Heb 9:4 Having a golden altar and the Ark of the Covenant covered about everywhere with gold, in

which were the golden pot that had the manna and Aaron's rod that budded and the tablets of the covenant,

Heb 9:5 And above it cherubim of glory overshadowing the expiation cover, concerning which it is not now the time to speak in detail.

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:

2 Cor 3:8 How shall the ministry of the Spirit not be more in glory?

2 Cor 3:9 For if there is glory with the ministry of condemnation, much more the ministry of righteousness abounds with glory.

2 Cor 3:10 For also that which has been glorified in this respect has not been glorified on account of the surpassing glory.

2 Cor 3:11 For if that which was being done away with was through glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

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.

Rom 3:25 Whom God set forth as a propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God passed over the sins that had previously occurred,

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.

Lev 16:14 And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger upon the expiation cover toward the east, and before the expiation cover he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

Lev 16:15 Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon the expiation cover and before the expiation cover.

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):

Lev 16:14 And he shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger upon the expiation cover toward the east, and before the expiation cover he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

Lev 16:15 Then he shall slaughter the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, and bring its blood inside the veil, and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon the expiation cover and before the expiation cover.

Lev 16:29 And this shall become a perpetual statute for you; in the seventh month on the tenth

day of the month you shall afflict your souls and not do any work, neither the native nor the sojourner who sojourns among you.

Lev 16:30 For on this day expiation shall be made for you, in order to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before Jehovah.

Prov 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people cast off restraint; / But happy is he who keeps the law.

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.

2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

Phil 1:19 For I know that for me this will turn out to salvation through your petition and the bountiful supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

Phil 1:20 According to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I will be put to shame, but with all boldness, as always, even now Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death.

Phil 1:21 For to me, to live is Christ ...

- 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.