

Chapter seventeen

Under The Blood

“And thou shalt make a mercy seat of pure gold: two cubits and a half shall be the length thereof, an cubit and a half the breadth thereof; And thou shalt make two cherubim of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in two ends of the mercy seat. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above the ark: and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony [the tables of the broken law] that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat.” (Exodus 25: 17,18,21, 22).

The ark of the testimony, a gold-plated, oblong box, stood behind the veil in the tabernacle of the congregation of Israel. It was a symbol of the throne of God, and is a picture of Christ, our Lord and king. The ark was surrounded by a crown of gold. In the ark were the tables of the law — the law which Israel had broken. The broken law demanded judgement and death for the transgressors. The law could not save; it could only condemn. It could not take away sin, it could only reveal sin. It could not give life to the sinner. It could only kill the transgressor. The law could not even spare Christ after He took our sins upon Himself, and became our sin-bearer. The law killed the Lord Jesus Christ because of the sin which He bore for us. The law lay in the ark, the throne of God. The ark therefore, by itself was a throne of judgement, condemning the sinner, demanding his death and eternal banishment from the presence of God. The veil before the ark barred the Israelites from coming to God, and the broken law threatened death to all who should dare to approach.

God's Provision

A provision, therefore, must be made whereby sin can be removed before man can escape the condemnation of death, and the judgement of the broken law. And this the Lord marvelously and wonderfully provided in the instruction which He gave to Moses in the making of the mercy seat, to be placed over the ark, above the broken law, between it and our God, who came down upon it in the shekinah pillar of holiness and fire.

The Mercy Seat

The mercy seat becomes therefore, a perfect picture of the Lord Jesus Christ in His mediatorial redemptive work. He is called our “mercy seat” in (Romans 3:25) “ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.” The word “propitiation”. Is “bilasterion” in the original Greek, and means literally “mercy seat” “ (Rom.3:25) may be freely translated, “Whom God hath set forth to be a mercy seat through faith in His blood.” This mercy seat was made of beaten gold. Christ became our mercy seat by the beating of Gethsemane and Calvary, and the shed blood to reconcile us to God by meeting the demands and the penalty of the broken law. Over this mercy seat, with out-stretched wings, stood the cherubim, symbols of the holiness of God. Without the mercy seat they would look down upon the broken law of God, and God's holiness would demand the death of the sinner. But the mercy seat was interposed between God and the broken law. Upon this mercy seat, which served actually as the cover of the ark, was sprinkled the blood from the slain animal on the altar of burnt offering in the court of the tabernacle. Once every year the high priest, after offering a sacrifice for himself, and for the sins of the people, took the blood in a basin, entered the holiest of all, behind the veil, and sprinkled this blood upon the mercy seat, over and above the broken law which called for the judgement of death. And now, when God came down in the shekinah cloud over the ark, instead of beholding the law which Israel had broken, He saw instead the blood of atonement, and God could not

exercise the judgement of death and of the law, for He Himself had promised: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." (Exod.12:13). That blood upon the mercy seat was taken from the burnt offering, where an innocent substitute had died and shed its atoning blood, and the penalty of the law had been met in the substitute, and God had now been reconciled. The ark, without the covering of blood and revealing God's holy law, was a throne of awful judgement for Israel. By the interposition of the mercy seat sprinkled with the blood of sacrifice, it becomes a throne of grace instead. The throne of judgement has become a throne of grace.

Only In Type

All of this, of course, was only a type of the work of Him who was still to come. This sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat was repeated each year by the high priest on the day of atonement. But this blood of bulls and of goats could not pay the price of sin; it could only atone for the time present; it could only cover sin, but never put it away. It must be fulfilled in the person of the Lamb of God, and by His precious blood. All this, was merely a shadow of the coming One. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered, because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. But this man [Jesus] after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb.10:1-4, 12). The Old Testament priest was compelled to minister continually "standing on his feet." He could not sit down even for a second, for the work was never done, and so there were no chairs provided in the tabernacle at all. But when Christ said, "It is finished," He went to heaven, and "sat down." Nothing can be added to the work of Christ, neither works, ordinances, religion, education or human merit of any kind.

Christ In Heaven

The blood was to be sprinkled, remember, on the mercy seat right after the death of the substitutionary animal of sacrifice. Now Christ is, of course, our substitute. This is clearly taught in the New Testament, (Heb.9:12) "But by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." The Bible also makes plain when He accomplished this. On the morning of the resurrection He meets Mary at the tomb. As soon as Mary recognized Him, she prostrated herself before Him, and would have kissed His feet, but with shocking suddenness, Jesus emphatically says to her; "Touch Me not" ; and then He proceeds immediately to give the reason why Mary is not permitted to touch Him at all. "For I AM not yet ascended to My Father: but go to. My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and My God and your God." (Jn. 20: 17). We can understand this action when we remember that the high priest, after He offered the sacrifice, was to enter the holy of holies, before he did anything else, with the precious blood. No one was allowed to approach Him. Everyone was shut out until this was completely done. Meeting with Mary we have the fulfillment of this type. Here Mary meets her high great Priest, just arisen from the tomb, but before He had entered the holy of holies with the reconciling blood. And says to her, "Touch Me Not." But the same evening Jesus appears suddenly to His disciples in the upper room, and in answer to their doubts; He says : "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see." (Lk.24:39). He says in essence, Touch Me now, and see that I AM not a spirit, but man of flesh and bone. Now notice carefully that morning He says to Mary, "Touch Me not,". And the reason He gave was, "I must ascend to finish the priestly

transaction in the holy of holies." But that same night our Lord says, Now you can touch Me freely; "Handle Me, and see." He Won't to heaven, and in fulfillment of type presented the blood upon the mercy seat in heaven. It meant that the work is completely done, the veil has been permanently rent, the blood has been applied, sin is not only Atoned, but God is reconciled, the law has been satisfied, and all believers have been justified forever.

An important and practical Truth:

When the High Priest went into the holy of holies on the day of atonement, he needed to do nothing except to present the precious blood. Tradition tells us that he uttered one word as he stood in the presence of God, the secret, mystic, name of "Javeh". But the Bible makes no mention of the priest speaking a single word. The blood was enough. (Heb.12:24). says "We are come to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." The blood speaks for us. God had said, "All I need is to see the blood." "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." Oh, sinner, you have nothing to do but to plead the blood of Jesus, for to reject the blood is to reject the Author of salvation. And, oh, saint of God, plead the blood, for it is the key to victory over the Devil and all temptation in the world. The devil fears the blood as he fears nothing else, he will flee before all who claim the blood