

Lesson 10: The Atonement Cover

Read: Exodus 25:17-22, Leviticus 16:11-19

The atonement cover, also called the mercy seat, was like a lid covering the Ark of the Covenant. On top of it stood two cherubim (angels) at the two ends, facing each other. The cherubim, symbols of God's divine presence and power, were facing downward toward the ark with outstretched wings that covered the atonement cover. The whole structure was beaten out of one piece of pure gold.

Discussion:

1. What is the significance of the atonement cover in light of Exodus 25:22 and Leviticus 16:2?
2. The ark and atonement cover were a symbol of God's presence and power among His people. Do you recall any incidents regarding the power of the ark in history of the Israelites?
3. Leviticus 16:11-19 talks of the Day of Atonement, the annual day that the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies. Bringing burning incense to shield his eyes from a direct view of God's glory, the high priest sprinkled blood from a bull onto the atonement cover for his and his household's sins, then sprinkled blood from a goat for all the sins of Israel. Thinking back on previous lessons regarding blood, what was the significance of sprinkling blood on the atonement cover?

4. Recall the three items in the Ark of the Covenant that reminded the Israelites that they had rejected God's provision, authority and law. They were an unpleasant symbol of man's sins and shortcomings in God's presence. In light of this, how is the atonement cover important? What is the significance of the term "atonement cover"?

5. Do we have an atonement cover today?

6. Read and compare Hebrews 9:7 and 4:16. What is the difference between the high priests in the Old Testament and us today in approaching God's throne?