

Going Deeper – 7/11/2021 – He Himself is the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 2:2



Begin with prayer: Father, reveal yourself to us in new and deeper ways. Jesus, draw us closer to you and deepen the intimacy of our relationship with you. Holy Spirit, help us to hear what you have to teach us today, and help this topic be better understood and practically applied to our lives.

Questions to begin with:

- What did you learn from Pastor Linda's message on Sunday?
- What stayed with you that help your spiritual journey?
- What confused you and what needs more explanation?

In Exodus 25:16-25, Pastor Linda introduced us to the word 'propitiation', the mercy seat, and a sacrificial system practiced by the Jews. Take a moment to look up 'propitiation' in Wikipedia. If you are like me, you get the sense from reading Wikipedia that God is continually ticked off and angry, requiring appeasement. The correct understanding fortunately for us requires understanding justice as a part of God's character. The sacrificial system portrayed was never a true covering of sin and never substituted for Jesus's sacrifice.

'Hilasteron' is the Greek transliteration and 'Kippur' the Hebrew, of our word 'propitiation'. The English word 'atonement' is closely related and often used to define propitiation. Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement in Judaism would be the time when the high priest would enter the Holy of Holies to sprinkle sacrificial blood on the mercy seat.

I have never understood the kaporet or 'mercy seat'; which was the gold lid or covering on the Ark of the Covenant. ('ark' is another word for chest/container/box.... aside: could there be a successful movie titled "Raiders of the Lost Box"?) The mercy seat for me is best understood by using the English definition of seat as a 'base' or 'headquarters' rather than bench or throne. If so, it is the site of God's presence. The mercy seat is also a physical covering for the contents. So, there is the presence of God covering the Mosaic covenant as symbolized in the Ark. Just like God having taken full ownership of the Abrahamic covenant as God's presence passed through the halved animals; might this symbolize God fulling covering or atoning for our failure(s)?

Homework Assignment: There are many examples in both the Old Testament and New where the writer grasps God's desire for our allegiance, obedience, and love above sacrifice, even under the old covenant. Ps 40:6; Ps 50:8-15; Ps 51:8-17; Prov 21:3; Isa 66:3; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:7-8; and Mat 9:12 (Jesus) all point to a God who desires our _____ over sacrifice. Fill in the blank from each verse.

If I tried to fly a spaceship to the sun to learn more about it, I would disintegrate and cease to live. Not because the sun is mean or vengeful, but because its heat and light are more than I can bear. Let's pretend there could be a super-asbestos covering for my little spaceship, I could then approach it because of the covering. Is approaching God similar? Because of his holiness and righteousness, we would not be able to stand in his presence. But Jesus is our 'super-asbestos' covering that makes it possible for us to approach him and draw near.

So Consider:

- Describe how you understand "propitiation."
- Describe your spiritual journey of understanding what it means that Christ died for your sins.
- Express your gratitude for Jesus and what he has done in your life.