

## The Truth About Mercy, Pt. 2

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We're continuing in a series entitled *The Truth About Mercy*, with this being *Part 2*.

To me, this subject has gotten more and more interesting and exciting because of the timeliness of everything and where it's going, and what we're being shown. But I have been looking forward to giving this one.

We have been looking at the word "mercy" to see how it isn't understood in the best way due to how some things have been translated in scripture, going back into old Latin, and again, that great false church that has done these things because they couldn't see God as He truly is. They had concepts of gods of the world, of gods of mankind that have existed, and that's the thinking of mankind. It has to be related to emotions and feeling and thinking like mankind, and God isn't like mankind.

So again, their perception of God was that He was hard and, as it were, almost to a point of looking for evil and wrong in mankind. Well, you don't have to look for it, it's always in us. It's what we are. It's our nature. It's what He created us to have the capacity to live, to be, so we could learn from that process, so we could make choices and decisions for the greatest and most important choices we ever have to make in our life. Do we want to be this way, or do we want what God is offering – to get rid of selfishness, learning to hate it?

Let's begin in a quick look here where we ended in Ephesians 2 last Sabbath. It was stated that the basis for the term "mercy" must always be recognized as that which is constructed or built upon God's loving kindness. That's what this is about, God's love. His favor and His compassion, which is a matter again, of His love, agape. It's that love He has for mankind, for His entire plan, because it's about His Family and about how that can become possible. And so, everything is geared toward that, and this is the context of what we're going through right now.

**Ephesians 2:1—Now, you who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air...** So again, it's that attitude, that same kind of attitude and spirit of selfishness, of that which is against God because the carnal mind is against God. The carnal, normal mind without God's help is against God, is against God's way. "It's not subject to the law of God," as it says, "and neither indeed can be" until God calls us and helps us to begin (if we choose) to make a change in that regard, choosing Him.

**...the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience.** So again, we're called, we begin to be transformed, we still have that nature within us, but we grow spiritually, and our minds do begin to be transformed, we do begin to be in greater agreement with God as we grow, more at one with God.

**Among whom also we all had our conduct in times past in the lusts of our flesh...** So, without God, we are as the rest of the world. That's all it's saying. We lived as the world did. We couldn't live any other way until God begins to draw and call us.

**...fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind,** because we're selfish, **and were by nature the children of...** it says "**wrath,**" but it's **children of evil.** That's a hard thing for human beings, for mankind, for people to admit, to acknowledge that is our basic nature. It isn't good. It isn't right. It isn't just. It's just selfish. And if we can't see our nature is selfish, we don't know the battle we're in, and that's horrible if we can't see the battle.

We choose to fight that battle. That's what this is all about. We want to conquer and overcome this and this kind of thinking that comes out of this mind. We want the mind of God and that's what we desire to yield ourselves to and to grow in.

**...and were by nature the children of evil, even as others. But God,** it says here, again, **who is rich in mercy...** This again, this word is more closely associated with the word "**compassion.**" So, even in the New Testament this same word, this same idea is picked up and carried out in writings in the New Testament as we're going to find out more and more as we go along in this.

Then we went through the definition of compassion. Again, this captures it: "Recognizing the suffering of others." God knows what we're like. He sees what we suffer through because of what we are, because He made us this way. He knew what it would be like when human beings, when mankind by that motivation of selfishness, what their lives would be like. They would be one of suffering, one of sorrow, one of pain, one of hurt because it's one that rejects God's way and doesn't want God in their life. And because of that living ever how they want to that automatically brings in problems and trials and suffering and drama that is just a part of life, human life.

"Recognizing," again, "the suffering of others and then taking action to help." God has a plan for that, and not just taking action. He's been doing that for nearly six thousand years, but He has a plan for expanding that in an awesome way here during the Millennium and the Great White Throne.

"It's a tangible expression of love of those who are suffering or in need; a sympathetic consciousness of other's distress together with a desire or taking of action to help alleviate it." And God goes far beyond this when it comes to this kind of mind, this kind of thinking.

So again, **verse 4—But God, who is rich,** or has a wealth, if you will, a better way of saying it, **a wealth of compassion, for His great love** (His agape) **wherein He loved us, even when we were...** Because that's what it stems from, agape. So naturally, He has this incredible compassion for His creation and wants to see it saved, wants to see it come through this process, wants people to make the right choices when they're given the opportunity, but can't do it for them! He wanted that for the angelic realm but couldn't

do it for them, couldn't make them do it. You can't make anyone want, love God, obey God, desire that way of life. It's a choice.

**...and made us alive together with Christ.** What an awesome thing to understand we can dwell in Him, and they can dwell in us. ... **(for by grace you are saved.)** Grace encompasses all the attributes of God's favor and love and kindness toward us in action, **and has raised us up together, and made us to sit together in heavenly, in Joshua the Christ.** So, just that which is reserved for us. We are to inherit all things with Christ and all that's reserved for us and prepared for us once we are changed, once we come into God's Family.

Now we're going to move ahead to a well-known place that "mercy" is used in the Old Testament, and again, it concerns the mercy seat of God. The mercy seat of God. That's what it's called.

Now, the mercy seat was the gold lid that covered the ark of the covenant, that which is called the mercy seat, which had the two cherubim at the ends of that cover. Then, of course, the ark of the covenant was placed in the last portion of the temple known as the Holiest of Holies or Most Holy Place or the Holiest of Holies, as a whole.

Let's turn over to Exodus 25 and begin to read a little bit about this. **Exodus 25:16—Now, you shall put into the ark the testimony.** Sometimes it's called the ark of testimony, as well, or the ark of the covenant. **...the ark/the testimony, that which I will give you.**

**So, you will make a mercy seat of pure gold.** That's how it's translated here. **...of two cubits and a half to be the length thereof, and a cubit and a half to be the width of it. Then you are to make two cherubim of gold, of beaten work you shall make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. So, make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub at the other end; even of the mercy seat you are to make the two cherubim on the two ends of it.**

Now, we need to pause at this point and consider what's being said here concerning what's translated as "mercy seat." There is no such word being used with what Hebrew words mean concerning "seat." There is not even the word "seat" in this anywhere in Hebrew, but that's what the translators called it, the "mercy seat." The word "seat" has simply been added.

And when it comes right down to it as we go through this, you'll see where this takes a lot away from the true meaning of what this is all about. It's something that's been hidden from mankind, something mankind has never fully understood, and only those in God's Church, as a whole, can truly grasp and comprehend what this is all about.

So, what does this refer to in this being covered here in Exodus? A common definition you can find on the internet is that "It symbolized the place where mercy was dispensed." And in context, that is closer than what they named it. "It symbolized the place where mercy was dispensed to man, mankind over the law that he had transgressed." That's pretty shallow, actually, but still got a little bit in there.

So, what has been translated “mercy seat” comes from a single Hebrew word *kap·pō·reṯ*, which means “a propitiatory place.” Propitiatory. We’re more familiar with the word “propitiation.” The same word used in a different way. “A propitiatory place” or simply “a place of reconciling or reconciliation,” which meaning has to do with “the restoring to a right relationship.” In short, a relationship of mankind to God, how that was going to be restored. That’s what it’s about.

This Hebrew word has nothing to do with the meaning of “a seat,” nor of any connection to the meaning of “mercy.” Instead, it was given as a physical place to perform a specific service once a year on the Day of Atonement, which was a foreshadowing of God’s plan that was to be accomplished on a spiritual plane.

Because what they did in a physical routine, even as a high priest went in there once a year and performed his duties on Atonement, there was that relationship (which we’ll cover in Hebrews later on, the book of Hebrews), but that was done on a physical plane that didn’t take away sin at all. But again, we’ll come back to that later on. But it represents that which is to be done on a spiritual plane.

Everything in the temple – that’s what’s so awesome – has meaning and there are so many things we haven’t even known. God hasn’t even revealed to us yet about the temple and everything within it. Because everything has absolute specific purpose of something that is pictured on a spiritual plane. And this is quite incredible in itself, especially on the day that it happened because it has everything to do with that day, its meaning. Everything that’s accomplished there has everything to do with the meaning of the Day of Atonement and what’s revealed on the Day of Atonement.

So, it’s truly interesting to see two Hebrew words from which the Hebrew has derived here, the word *kap·pō·reṯ* that is mistranslated as “mercy seat” is derived first from — there are two words here — first, from the word “*kippirum*” which is the plural word for one we understand quite well, “*kippur*,” or as it is in Yom Kippur, which is Atonement for the Jewish people, that Day of Atonement. “*Kippur*” means “atonement.” This is the word from Middle English, that word from Middle English, that means “to be at one.” That’s where it comes from in English, it’s “to be at one.” That’s how the word “atonement” in English came about. Which is “to be reconciled and/or in agreement with.”

It’s a beautiful thing. We can come into agreement, we can be atoned to God, to be of the same mind, to grow in the same mind, to have our minds transformed where we are totally made at one with God, which means to be of the same mind, to be in agreement with God, a oneness with God that is on a spiritual plane and only accomplished by God dwelling in us forever, that power, that spirit, that life. It’s a beautiful thing.

The second word “*koper*” that’s here in this word has a definition of “a ransom; the price of a life; a price paid to be redeemed.” That’s what it’s all about. It’s beautiful. Everything that’s to be accomplished in and through Joshua the Christ. It started here.

By all rights, the most accurate translation for what's been mistranslated as "mercy seat" is this: "the place of atonement." It's what it is. It's a place. That's what it's referring to. Or the means, and we'll talk about some of this as we go along. It's more about what it represents as a means, the way it's accomplished, and place, and not as an object in that respect like a "mercy seat."

So, people probably had different ideas in their mind about a seat or something, or a throne or whatever, and it's not there. The entire thing that they had constructed was more than just the lid. This is the portion that covered the ark of the covenant. That shouldn't be lost because in Hebrew, in some of the meaning of some of these words, the word "covering" has everything to do with the process that God goes through to take care of everything, mankind's sins. All a part of God's plan, process.

Let's turn over to Joshua 3 where it talks about some of these things in context here and see what we can learn from it. **Joshua 3:7—Then the Eternal said unto Joshua, This day I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses so I will be with you.**

Now, this is incredibly important for God to do. It was incredibly important for the children of Israel to be guided and directed toward God in the right way through Joshua, and this was what God was going to do then to show "I am with Joshua. I am working with him as I did with Moses. You are to listen to him." And so, that's why some of these things were done. That's why God went through this process with them and told them what He did.

**Now, you shall command the priests that bear the ark of the covenant, saying, When you have come to the brink of the water of Jordan, you shall stand still in Jordan.** So, they were to come right down to the edge of it and stand there with the ark.

**So, Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come here and hear the words of the Eternal your God. Then Joshua said, Hereby, you shall know that the living God is among you.** It's like, "Take heart! Be encouraged! You're getting ready to go into a land. There is going to be fighting. There are going to be wars. There are going to be things to conquer, and right across here on the other side is Jericho." Basically, this is in their minds. And so, he's saying, "No," in essence, "God is with you, among you," **and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, the Gergashites, the Amorites, and the Jebusites.** Pretty well cleans out the land. This is all in accordance with their obedience to Him.

**Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passes over before you into Jordan.** So, God revealed Himself in different ways. Here in a specific way through things that they could grasp as a carnal, physical people. It had to be something they could see just as when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, all the things that took place in Egypt and then all of a sudden coming up to the sea and being able to go through as they did, all these things that they were able to see.

Now this so many of these had never seen things of God except for some of the things that they did when they did it wrong and they saw things that God did, witnessed some of those kinds of things. But here, totally different matter what it's preparing for.

**Verse 17**, jumping on down. **So, the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Eternal stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan.** This is flooding season, and this is a period of time when there is a lot of rain, and so it runs, overflows the banks. And so, they went down, stood there, and this is what's being discussed at this point in time. They stood firm because, in this case, the waters had stopped. God had stopped them farther up. It's not something to separate like He did when they came through the sea. They were stopped in one place and then still dried the ground.

But anyway, notice: **And they stood on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all of Israel passed over on dry ground until all the people had finished passing over the Jordan.** So, you know this had to give them incredible encouragement on a physical plane because that's all they had, that which was physical, as a whole, except for Joshua and a few. But as a whole, very carnal, very physical people and this was to lift them up to encourage them, "This is your God. Look at His power, what He can do. He is among you! He is with you!"

**Joshua 4:10**, dropping on down. **For the priests who bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until everything was finished, that the Eternal commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses,** as it says here, **commanded Joshua. And the people hurried and passed over.** So, I get a charge a little bit out of the "hurried" part because that's a little bit of carnal human nature as well, because they didn't really have to. God's going to keep it until they all get across. But it's like, to me, it's like they're not taking any chances. Yes, it's not flowing right now, and this is dry ground, but not too sure about this. So, I get a charge out of that.

**The people hurried and passed over. Then it came to pass, when all the people had finished passing over, that the ark of the Eternal passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people.**

In **verse 14** it says, **On that day the Eternal magnified Joshua in the sight of the people.** How? Because he told them these things. He told them what to do, how to do it, and so forth. "God is among you, and God is going to take care of these things as we go into this promised land, and here is the beginning of it." Incredible encouragement.

**So, He magnified Joshua in the sight of Israel, and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life.** So, a respect or a knowing there, and probably a measure on a physical plane as well. But generally, it's a matter of honor and respect and so forth that's shown and looking to him, in other words, that God was working with him. They didn't understand all that fully, what was taking place. What an incredible thing to have someone like that that was being worked with in that manner.

Verse 20. Now, this is bringing up the twelve stones, and I'm not reading all the story, but again here, they had the twelve stones that they had stacked up representing the twelve tribes of Israel, and so it's referring to some of this now.

**Verse 20** where it says, **Now, those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan, Joshua erected in Gilgal.** So, giving some things here about the history of it and what took place. **And he spoke unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What are these stones? "What does this mean? What is this about?" Then you shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over the Jordan on dry land.**

So again here, it's a reminder of what God did with him. Now, when they came through the Red Sea there was nothing that was given there like this, but "Here are the twelve stones and this is what you're to teach from here on whenever asked; this is what this is about." This is the story that they had.

**Verse 23—For the Eternal your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you until you were completely passed over, as the Eternal your God did to the Red Sea.** So, giving that same analogy here "Just like what God did in the Red Sea, opened up the sea, you passed through on dry ground, and God has done the same thing again with this river Jordan."

**...as God did to the Red Sea which He dried up from before you until we had gone over. So that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Eternal, that it is mighty, and that you might fear the Eternal your God forever.** So, sadly that doesn't stick with people. Going across the Jordan didn't take long to wear off. And sometimes I just marvel at these things on a physical plane as human beings. If we saw something that great, how would it affect your mind? I mean, even in the world today and people in the world. But it shows the nature of human beings, what we're like. It's quite atrocious.

So, let's go back to Exodus 25 now. We're going to read a little bit more about what is said concerning the making or construction of the lid that was placed upon the ark. So, picking up in the last verses where we earlier left off.

**Exodus 25:18—Then you are to make two cherubim of gold, of beaten work, and you will make them in the two ends of the place of atonement.** Just call it what it is. We don't need to use "mercy seat." I don't intend to use it anymore because it really doesn't carry the meaning of being a place of atonement because this is what it's all about. Everything that we read in the New Testament later on, awesomely inspiring when you go through everything it says about it because of Joshua and because of what he's fulfilled, and it just makes the story come alive that much more.

And to me, as we're preparing for Atonement coming up in time here quickly (it'll be on us before you know it), and you think, to me this is exciting that we're being able to be shown, to be able to see indeed what this is all about and how it fits together in a beautiful way because it's a part of revealing God more and more to us. That's preparing to reveal God more to the world. Awesome!

**Verse 19—So, make the one cherub on the one end, and the other at the other end, even of the place of atonement.** So much more descriptive. So much better.

After we go through this series of sermons here, or the next one at least, not sure about a fourth one here, but at this point here after we go through these and have these in our mind to be able to see all this, and especially this place of atonement and to understand what God is telling us in a greater way that fits together, it should be a beautiful thing, really, how everything fits hand in glove as everything does in God's plan and purpose.

**So, now the cherubim, it says, shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the place of atonement with their wings, and their faces one toward another; toward the place of atonement shall the faces of the cherubim be.** So, it's a place where God told them to come and He said He appeared, would appear in a cloud if you will, or that would come up from that area, and basically, it is about coming before God's presence. But it's more than that. It's about how we can come before God's presence because we can't just come before God's presence.

Here is something the high priest did only once a year as we go through the story. You can go through the story in Leviticus 16. Well, don't, because it's next Sabbath. We'll touch on it then and talk about it at that point.

But again, what an awesome thing here that this is what it's all about. It's a matter of recognizing that yes, these things come from God Almighty, they are at His throne, which represents His great power, and the cherubim that are there, the two archangels, if you will, that have been faithful and loyal to God, a part of God's plan, and then to understand this process here of what God is doing. That you can come before this place, but there is a specific way you have to do it. Every ceremony has great meaning that the high priest carried out. It's an awesome thing. It's a beautiful thing. Only once a year.

**Verse 21—Then you shall put the place of atonement above/upon the ark** if you will. It's above or upon the ark; and in the ark, you shall put the testimony that I have given to you. And I didn't pick that up here, but it might be in these words here where it has a word that has to do with "cover," that it is to cover, it is a cover for the whole ark of the covenant.

Because it shows a completion in God's plan of all the things that are in it and what was important and the things that they carried with them and the law of God, the way of God, the mind of God, the being of God. But the access to these things that God can give to mankind and has given to mankind in times past, can't be reached, can't be had except through what the covering is all about, having to do with the covering of sin and how God has gone about it, how we can have sin covered in our life.

Because it's about coming before God. It's about being atoned to God, reconciled to God, that one word that talks about being redeemed. There has to be a payment made. You know, it's a beautiful picture when you put it all together, showing it's about Christ. He made the payment. He paid the price for



everyone. It's all pictured then in what God wants us to grasp and comprehend, what was to be learned from that in the New Testament anyway, as what this is all about as a part of God's plan.

**Then you shall put the place of atonement above the ark; and in the ark, you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. So, there I will meet with you, and I will commune with you...** Probably better said, "Then I will..." Because this is what it's about. Without going through this part of the process there is no access to God Almighty, there is no relationship with God Almighty, and so again here, this ceremony and what the high priest did pictures spiritually what is being accomplished.

**...so there I will meet with you, and I will commune.** What's that all about? Fellowship! It's a spiritual thing. "Communion" in the New Testament and "commune" so often is about a fellowship, a relationship with God Almighty.

I really hate that word, "communion," because of what that church did to it as well. It's about fellowship. It's about a relationship with God Almighty and they've tarnished it, made it a physical routine type thing that is sick, perverted, if you will.

**And I will commune with you above the place of atonement.** So, there is a way to God's presence, and this is the way. **...from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony.** So again, showing the authority, the power of Almighty God who has set these things aside and this is how it's accomplished, and here it is, the place of atonement. This is where you have to be focused.

**...between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give you in commandment unto the children of Israel.**

Now, I had more pages than I normally have in my notes, but I got through them swiftly, so this is the end of the sermon. Hopefully, you have enough to digest from this one and we'll continue on next Sabbath.