**WEEK 2**

**THE ABUNDANT MERCIES OF OUR GOD**

**INTRODUCTION**

Teachers should do a recap of all that they taught last week especially the connection between Mercy and forgiveness as this would serve as a useful foundation to this week’s teaching.

**MERCY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT / THE MERCY SEAT**

Let go further in our study of the mercy of God. The old testament is the shadow of the new testament. The mercies of God that we see and enjoy in the new testament was foreshadowed in the old testament. The old testament folks would definitely not be oblivious of the mercy of God as one of the sacred items in the Temple was the MERCY SEAT.

It is no coincidence that the place where the people offered sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins was called the Mercy seat.

* The mercy seat was seen only once a year by the high priest and that was on the day of atonement, where all the people gathered to have their sins atoned for the previous year as they entered the new year. **See** **Leviticus 16: 30 &34**

Let’s take a look at the procedures involved in this sacrifice which the bible described as a figure of what was to come. **See Leviticus 16:3-28 NKJV …. (for time sake you are not enjoined to read everything, the people can go through it for their further study. Focus on Leviticus16: 5,7-9 &15 -17)**

* The summary of the activities done is that one goat would be slain to picture a substitutionary death and the other sent to the wilderness to represent a removal of sins.
* Asides the two goats, the high priest would offer sacrifices for the himself and his family before offering sacrifices for the sins of the people, there was also a burnt offering of a Ram to be made for the High priest and the people.

**Leviticus16: 5,7-9 &15 -17**

**5] "And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.**

**7] "He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.**

**8] "Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.**

**9] "And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell and offer it as a sin offering.**

**15] "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.**

**16] "So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so, he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.**

**17] "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.**

* The High priest went back to the courtyard and cast lost for two goats presented by the people. And he sacrificed one goat as a sin offering for the people. He then re-enters the Holies of Holies and then to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat and also the Holy place. The other goat would be the scapegoat which would be sent to the wilderness.

**N: B (teachers main focus while teaching would be to show how that for there to be atonement or a pardon for sins, the High priest had to enter the holy of Hollies and the blood of the sin offering had to be placed on the mercy seat. This was the highlight of the atonement ceremony)**

**PERSONAL STUDY INFO**

(to aid your understanding while teaching not for step by step teaching)

**Leviticus 16:4**

**"He shall put the holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These are holy garments. Therefore, he shall wash his body in water, and put them on.**

* The procedure starts with the High priest washing his body and dressing up before entering the tabernacle. This was a special Atonement day clothing.

**Leviticus16: 3,6 &11**

**3] "Thus, Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering.**

**6] "Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house.**

**11] "And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself.**

* Then the High priest offers the bull as a sin offering for himself and his family

**Leviticus16: 12-14**

**12] "Then he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of sweet incense beaten fine, and bring it inside the veil.**

**13] "And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the mercy seat that is on the Testimony, lest he die.**

**14] "He shall take some of the blood of the bull and sprinkle it with his finger on the mercy seat on the east side; and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.**

* The High priest entered holies of Holies with the bull’s blood, incense and burning coals from the altar of burnt offering. He then sprinkled the bulls blood on the altar seven (7) times.

**Leviticus16: 5,7-9 &15 -17**

**5] "And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.**

**7] "He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.**

**8] "Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.**

**9] "And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell and offer it as a sin offering.**

**15] "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.**

**16] "So he shall make atonement for the Holy Place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so, he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness.**

**17] "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy Place, until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel.**

* The High priest went back to the courtyard and cast lost for two goats presented by the people. And he sacrificed one goat as a sin offering for the people. He then re-enters the Holies of Holies and then to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat and also the Holy place. The other goat would be the scapegoat which would be sent to the wilderness.

**Leviticus16: 11,15,18-19**

**11] "And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which is for himself.**

**15] "Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which is for the people, bring its blood inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat.**

**18] "And he shall go out to the altar that is before the LORD, and make atonement for it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar all around.**

**19] "Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the children of Israel.**

* The High priest returned to the altar of burnt offering and cleansed it with the blood of the bull and goat. That is the blood of the animal sacrificed for his sins and that for the sins of the people.

**Leviticus 16:20-22**

**20] "And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy Place, the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat.**

**21] "Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man.**

**22] "The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.**

**26] "And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.**

* The sins of the people were laid on the scapegoat and it was dispatched into the wilderness. It was believed that as the goat walked out of the camp it carried with him the sins of the people. (Jesus was described by John the Baptist in **John 1:29** as the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the people.) The man who carried the goat out of the wilderness had to wash his clothes upon his return.

**Leviticus 16:23-24**

**23] "Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy Place, and shall leave them there.**

**24] "And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people.**

* The High priest took away his Special Day of atonement clothing, rewashed and then put on his regular clothing.

**Leviticus 16:3,5 & 24 -25**

**3] "Thus Aaron shall come into the Holy Place: with the blood of a young bull as a sin offering, and of a ram as a burnt offering.**

**5] "And he shall take from the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.**

**24] "And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make atonement for himself and for the people.**

**25] "The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar.**

* The High priest would then offer two rams as burnt offerings for himself and the people and the fat of the sin offering was burnt outside the camp.

**Leviticus 16: 27-28**

**27] "The bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy Place, shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal.**

**28] "Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.**

* The bull -and-goat sin offerings were carried outside the camp to be burned. The one who burned the sin offering cleansed himself.

**N: B (The atonement procedure as in Leviticus 16:3-28 have been explained chronologically but the verses by verse commentary is not sequential.)**

**MERCY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Having looked at the ceremonial cleansing procedures, you would notice how sanctimonious and cautiously the priest performed them. However, these practices could never give the people forgiveness of sins as they were not the will of God.

**Hebrews 10: 1-4**

**1] THE OLD SYSTEM IN THE LAW OF MOSES WAS ONLY A SHADOW OF THE THINGS TO COME, NOT THE REALITY OF THE GOOD THINGS CHRIST HAS DONE FOR US. The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but THEY WERE NEVER ABLE TO PROVIDE PERFECT CLEANSING FOR THOSE WHO CAME TO WORSHIP.**

**2] If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared.**

**3] But just the opposite happened. Those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year.**

**4] FOR IT IS NOT POSSIBLE FOR THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND GOATS TO TAKE AWAY SINS.**

* The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. They only produced a ceremonial cleansing for the people and was in fact a picture of what Christ would do as he alone would be the high priest, sin offering and scape goat. All this was fulfilled by Christ so that we may obtain the mercy of God, a pardon for our sins.
* No matter how careful the priest was in performing this ceremony it did not have the real cleansing power to make the people perfect. It was simply a ceremony, an enactment and a figure of Christ who by the perfect sacrifice of himself on the cross died as a sin offering for our sins.
* It was the norm for the High priest to offer the sacrifice (they were different) but in the new testament, because Christ is our faithful High priest and the sin offering, he offered himself and today is seated at the right hand of God signifying a complete and finished work. \*\*\*The implication of this is that the essence of the old testament practice was fulfilled and there is no need for another offering for sins rather faith in his blood (his death and resurrection) \*\*\* **See Hebrews 10:11-14**

**Hebrews 4:14 -16**

**14] SEEING THEN THAT WE HAVE A GREAT HIGH PRIEST who has passed through the heavens, JESUS THE SON OF GOD, let us hold fast our confession.**

**15] For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.**

**16] Let us THEREFORE COME BOLDLY TO THE THRONE OF GRACE, that we may OBTAIN MERCY AND FIND GRACE TO HELP IN TIME OF NEED.**

* According to the ceremony (old testament), the blood of the sin offering had to be placed on the mercy seat for the people to receive mercy that is a pardon of sins for a year. In the reality (New testament) Christ our sin offering and High priest is seated on the throne of God, at the right hand, the throne of grace forever and so there is mercy from God to mankind reaching to all who would believe in Christ. **See Hebrews 1:3, 8:1,10:11-14 & Hebrews12:2.**  The mercy seat was a figure of the throne of God on which Christ is seated on at the right hand of God. The mercy seat is the throne of Grace and Christ our sin offering and High priest is seated there for us. The result of this seating is abundant mercy for us.

**Hebrews 8:1**

**Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: WE HAVE SUCH A HIGH PRIEST, WHO IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF THE MAJESTY IN THE HEAVENS,**

**Hebrews 12:2**

**looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, AND HAS SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE THRONE OF GOD.**

**CHRIST OUR PROPITIATION**

Christ by becoming our sin offering and High priest has become the propitiation for our sins.

**Rom 3:23 -26**

**23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,**

**24] being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,**

**25] WHOM GOD SET FORTH AS A PROPITIATION BY HIS BLOOD, THROUGH FAITH, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed,**

**26] to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

* The Greek word propitiation is **HILLSTERION** (noun) meaning an expiatory sacrifice. its root is in another Greek word **HILASKOMAI** (verb)which means to expiate, to atone or conciliate. To expiate is to extinguish the guilt a person or pay for a penalty. Hence, we can say that the Christ Jesus died and resurrected in other to expiate our sins. Christ Jesus is the expiator for our sins
* ment is Christ Jesus who has now become our propitiator.

**Hebrews 9:5 NKJV**

**and above it was the cherubim of glory overshadowing THE MERCY SEAT. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.**

Let’s see some other scriptures

**1 John 2:1-2**

**1] My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**

Interestingly the same word translated propitiation as used in **Romans 3:25** was translated as mercy seat in **Hebrews 9:5** when the writer described the temple of old. This further buttress that the big picture of Gods Mercy as foreshadowed in the old testa

**2] And HE HIMSELF IS THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.**

**1 John 4:10**

**In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and SENT HIS SON TO BE THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.**

* This understanding debunks the notion of asking God for mercy, asking would never give you mercy it is only the sacrifice of Jesus and nothing more. Biblically speaking for there to be Mercy, there needs to be an atonement, a propitiation that is a sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goat is not the real atonement, Christ is.
* Once a man has faith in the Jesus as the propitiation for his sins he receives and obtains mercy from God.
* Crying, good works and soberness can never and has never made a person obtain the mercy of God only be by the blood Jesus can. As we have seen earlier even the blood of bulls and goat cannot.
* Note… he is not **“a propitiation for sins”** he is **“the propitiation”**. The usage of the word **“THE”** makes it definite. Meaning there is no other way a person’s sins can be atoned for except through Jesus.